DISSENT

Dateline Montgomery:

The Southern Negroes Speak — L. D. REDDICK

New Orleans: Negroes and the Church — SAUL GOTTLIEB

Reverberations in the North — IRVING HOWE

From Stalin to Khrushchev:

The New Turn in Russia — LEWIS COSER

Strikes in the Russian Camps — PAUL BARTON

From the Polish Wasteland — A POEM

A Voice from Algeria — MESSALI HADJ

Spain: Twenty Years After — RAMON SENDER

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Reflections on the H-Bomb — GUNTHER ANDERS

In Defense of Radicalism — STUART HAMPSHIRE

The Politics of My Novels — IGNAZIO SILONE

SPRING 1956 — 75c

DISSENT

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"I Was Quite Tired..."

"...I had been working all day on the job. I was quite tired after spending a full day working. I handle and work on clothing that white people wear. That didn't come in my mind but this is what I wanted to know; when and how would we ever determine our rights as human beings? The section of the bus where I was sitting was what we call the colored section, especially in this neighborhood because the bus was filled more than two-thirds with Negro passengers and a number of them were standing. And just as soon as enough white passengers got on the bus to take what we consider their seats and then a few over, that meant that we would have to move back for them even though there was no room to move back....Just having paid for a seat and then only ride a couple of blocks without being disturbed and then I would have to stand, was too much. These other persons had got on the bus after I did—it meant that I didn't have a right to do anything but get on the bus, give them my fare and then be pushed wherever they wanted me....This incident had been experienced by so many others—many Negroes had been subjected to this type of humiliation. I think they responded because each person had experienced something of the same thing...."

ROSA PARKS, recounting her role in the incident which provoked the Montgomery, Ala., bus boycott to a conference on integration at the Highlander Folk School (Monteagle, Tennessee).

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A QUARTERLY OF SOCIALIST OPINION

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SPAIN: TWENTY YEARS AFTER

Ramón Sender

The civil war in Spain ended twenty years ago. That's what people say. Practical and realistic men view war as a sport. When a public game is over the people cheer the winner. Those present in the stadium go home. Those listening to the broadcast turn off the radio. And those reading the newspaper reports turn the page.

And they all go off for a good sound sleep.

But this was something more than a sporting match. It was a people defending its freedoms. In that defense cities were destroyed (nine thousand civilian dead in Guernica in one hour) and battles lost (seventy thousand dead in four weeks along the Ebro). In the end one million dead to bury. Each one of these dead had relatives, friends, some woman who loved him. All told, about twenty persons in some way concerned with each victim. This makes twenty million human beings in Spain with burning, alert memory. Not enough years have passed to let us forget.

Memory is important. It is the basis of everything in man's personality. It is our only means of establishing standards, appraising facts and planning our future. If we are forgetful we will be erratic, rambling, lost. We will be disarmed before today's confusion and, above all, tomorrow's peril.

Today's confusion? Besides the twenty million Spaniards in Spain who recall the past there are five hundred thousand emigrés, each with his own personal sphere of influence. Can any less than thirty citizens who share his moral interests be attributed to each of them? This makes fifteen million more people whose memory is fresh. Without counting organized political groups. If we continue in this direction we can pile up striking evidence.

But this is unnecessary. It is all so obvious. The match came to an end in 1939 and all the burning problems of that war period are not only unsolved but have increased. The Spanish Fascists are realists and know it. Therefore their jails are still full of political prisoners and there is rationing, civilian, military and ecclesiastical censorship, back market and terror. All this has vanished from the belligerent countries of Europe, but in Spain street fighting continues and not between reds and blues, or Moors and Chris-

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THE BUS BOYCOTT IN MONTGOMERY

L. D. Reddick

MONTGOMERY, ALA.

Suddenly, Montgomery, Alabama, has become one of the world's most interesting cities. It is a handsome little town, restful for an ex-urbanite. In its center is a spacious circle with gently flowing water-spray, covered by soft lights in the evening. From it one looks down the main avenue to the white marble Capitol. Here markers tell the visitor where Jefferson Davis stood when he swore allegiance to the Southern Confederacy.

But it is not the White House of the Confederacy, preserved in Montgomery by aged daughters of the Lost Cause, that attracted the newspaper men, sociologists, and just plain visitors who have been floating in and out these past few weeks. It is the bus boycott. The metropolitan dailies have on the scene what have been jokingly called "war correspondents covering the Southern front." And there are journalists from Japan, England, France.

With all the odds against it, the Negro community of Montgomery has initiated and sustained what is easily the most creative approach yet made to the crisis in race relations. And even those of us who have watched developments unfold day by day are reluctant to say that we understand fully what we see or that we can predict the outcome of it all.

Before last December, a visitor to Montgomery would have noticed Negroes standing up in the city buses, while there were empty seats right before them. Somebody could then explain that according to local practice, these unoccupied seats were reserved for "whites only." No matter how packed a bus might be with Negro passengers, they were prohibited from sitting in the first 4 seats (which hold about 10 persons). Theoretically, the last 3 back seats (holding about 10 persons) were similarly reserved for Negroes. In fact this was not so. Moreover, if white passengers were already occupying all of their reserved seats and additional white passengers boarded the bus, Negro passengers, sitting in the unreserved section immediately behind the whites, might be asked to get up and "move back" by the bus driver. At times this was done courteously; all-too-often it was an undisguised insult.

Race relations in Montgomery have traditionally been "good" in

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the sense that Negroes have seldom challenged their state of subordination. The structure of the society was more or less set. Opposition seemed futile. Personal difficulties might be adjusted through some prominent Negro, who would speak with an influential white person. This was the established pattern of paternalism; and it did not disturb the status quo.

But for some reason on Thursday afternoon, December 1, 1955, Mrs. Rosa Parks refused to "move back" when she was ordered to do so by the bus driver. She was *not* sitting in the section reserved for whites (as the *New York Times* mistakenly reported) but in the first seat of the unreserved section. At the time every seat in the bus was taken. So the command for her to "move back" meant that she would have to stand while a white male passenger, who had just taken the bus, would sit. And so she was arrested and for a brief moment jailed.

Mrs. Parks was ideally fitted for her role. She is attractive and quiet, a churchgoer who looks like the symbol of Mother's Day. Her trial was set for the following Monday, December 5. Out of nowhere, it seems, written and mimeographed appeals appeared in the Negro community, saying: "...This has to be stopped...if Negroes did not ride the buses they could not operate... every Negro stay off the buses Monday in protest of this arrest and trial..."

Only a fraction of Negro bus riders saw these unsigned appeals but one of the notices did fall into the hands of the local paper, which put it on the front page. Negroes laugh when they tell about this. They say that the newspaper was mostly interested in letting the white folks know what the Negroes were up to. But through this story many Negroes got the news of the Monday plan for the first time. At the Sunday church service, Negro ministers hammered home their endorsement of the projected one-day "protest"—as they consistently called the boycott.

Physically, Montgomery is ideally fitted for a bus boycott. It is just 27.9 square miles in area. Its population, 130,000, is about 40 per cent Negro. Most residents *could* walk to most places in the city.

The judge who tried Mrs. Parks, had he looked into his crystal ball, would have probably dismissed the case. Instead, he found her guilty, fining her $14. She appealed.

All day long on December 5 Negroes stayed off the buses. They did so with such enthusiasm that there was a general feeling that "we ought to continue this."

The Negro ministers had hastily scheduled a mass meeting for Monday evening. Normally, the church holds about 1500 persons. Hours before meeting time, 7:00 p.m., people began filling up the place. By 7 o'clock every seat had been taken and some 3 or 4 thousand standees over-flowed into the street. Outdoor loudspeakers were set up.

Nobody expected such a response. The Negro ministers, rising to the occasion, improvised a declaration of principles. Amid the singing

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of hymns and some first class oratory—led by Rev. M. L. King Jr.—the audience unanimously adopted the following declaration as read by Rev. Ralph Abernathy: Negroes were not to resume riding the buses until (1) courteous treatment by bus operators was guaranteed; (2) passengers were seated on a first come, first serve basis—Negroes seating from the back of the bus toward the front while whites seat from the front toward the back; (3) Negro bus operators were employed on predominately Negro routes.

Then without the usual money-raising salesmanship, the crowd —inside and outside of the church—filed in and placed dimes, quarters and dollars on the collection table. This was altogether spontaneous.

Since the Negro ministers were cagey about revealing who was directing the movement, that seemed to whet the appetite of the reporters. As a matter of fact, at this point every thing was *ad hoc* and tentative. The emergence of King and Abernathy was almost by chance. No leader was calling the shots. As Abernathy said later, it was never "a one-man-show". The indignation and demands for action by the "common people" swept everyone along like a flood.

II

There had been a long history of abuse by the bus operators. Almost everybody could tell of some unfortunate personal experience that he himself had had or seen. Montgomery Negroes were fed up with the bus service in particular and, like Negroes throughout the South, with race relations in general. The outrage of the Emmett Till murder was alive in everybody's mind. The silence and inaction of the Federal Government, in the face of the daily abuse, beatings and killings of Negro citizens, was maddening. Negroes have no faith at all in Southern law-making and law-enforcing agencies, for these instruments of "justice" are all in the hands of "the brothers of the hoodlums who attack us".

Negroes themselves wanted to get into action. Here and elsewhere they were willing to fight it out—if the fighting was "fair." But Negroes knew on whose side the police and the lily-white militia would be when they came in to "put down disorder." And after that,—there would be the local judges and juries. To remain human, the Negroes simply could not stand by and do nothing. Under the circumstances, the channel into which the Negroes of Montgomery have poured their energies and resentments is the best answer thus far to the question of what to do. Here is organized struggle and group solidarity. It is legal, nonviolent and effective.

And so the one-day boycott passed into an indefinite protest that, as of this writing, has run for fourteen weeks.

Both the press and the police expected violence. Early newspaper stories started off in this fashion: "Negro goon squads reportedly have

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been organized here to intimidate Negroes who ride...in violation of a Negro boycott..." This was untrue.

The police were equally sure of the image in their minds. Accordingly, they arrested a college student, saying that he had pulled a Negro woman from a bus as she was attempting to get on it. In court it came out that the two were good friends and that they were merrily crossing the street, arm in arm, near a bus. She had told the cops this before the arrest was made but the police believed that there were goons—there had to be—so they saw what they were looking for: "believing is seeing."

The first reaction of the bus company officials was one of arrogance. They pretended that the Negroes were demanding that the company violate the law. This was absurd. The law required segregation, but did not specify the manner of seating so long as it was segregated. The bus company summarily rejected the proposal of the Negroes.

The city commission sided with the bus company, condemning the boycott and declaring that "first come, first serve" would be illegal. And so almost everybody—the bus company, the city commissioners and the white public—expected Negroes to be back on the buses in a few days.

This was only the first of a series of misjudgments on the part of the city fathers. All along they demonstrated that their conception of the Negro was the stereotype of the tired field hand or the witless house servant who could be cajoled or forced to do what the white folks wanted him to do. Even now, after 14 weeks of "education," the commissioners seem not to comprehend the intelligence, resourcefulness and resolve of the people with whom they are dealing.

III

The ex-bus riders soon found themselves face to face with a practical problem: since the buses were taboo, how were the Negroes to get about the city? At first, they called upon the taxis for cheap-rate jitney service. The police stopped this by warning the taxis that by law they must charge a minimum fare of 45 cents. Next, private cars began giving "friends" a lift, along the bus routes. The charge was 15 cents for "gasoline expense." The cops stopped this, too, by insisting that drivers had to have a taxi permit and license.

In reply, the Negroes organized a voluntary motor pool. Almost overnight Montgomery saw a network of private cars spread over the city, picking up and depositing passengers, from dawn until early evening. It was a marvel of quick organization. Even the local press had to concede that the pick-up system moved with "military precision." Some transportation problems that the bus company had grappled with for twenty years were, apparently, solved overnight.

The police searched the books for laws that would dry up the motor pool. One old rule forbade more than three persons to sit on the front seat of an automobile. Lights, brakes, even the position of

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license tags, were checked by the police frequently. Minor regulations that are seldom invoked in this normally easy-going town were resurrected and severely enforced. Negro taxi drivers really caught it!

The Negro community of Montgomery has neither its own radio station (as does Atlanta, Ga.) nor a widely-read local newspaper. Communication is by word of mouth and through churches mainly. This is probably why frequent mass meetings have proved a necessity. The pattern was established during the first week of the boycott: mass meetings each Monday and Thursday evening. It has been adhered to ever since.

These twice-a-week get-togethers are the soul of the boycott; the Montgomery Improvement Association is the brains. The meetings are rotated from church to church. The speakers, in turn, represent the various denominations. Thus the ground is cut from under any institutional or sectarian jealousy. Rev. King and Rev. Abernathy make it plain by their words and by their sharing of the speakers' platform that they are not self-appointed "leaders" but only "spokesmen" of the movement. Incidentally, the people have "fallen in love" with King, a boyish-looking Ph.D. They look upon Abernathy, also young and an M.A., as a tower of strength. These two men symbolize the poise, the thoughtfulness and the ability of the independent ministers. They are the real and obvious leaders of this mass upsurge. The more vulnerable intellectuals stay discreetly in the background. Rufus Lewis, an ex-football coach and presently a civic-minded business man, is the cool-headed chairman of the motor pool committee.

People come hours ahead of time to get a seat at these mass meetings. A few read papers and books while waiting, but mostly the audiences sing. Hymns such as "Onward Christian Soldiers," "Abide With Me" and "Higher Ground" are moving but the really stirring songs are the lined, camp-meeting tunes, of low pitch and long meter. These seem to recapture the long history of the Negro's suffering and struggle.

IV

By 7 p.m., the time the meeting starts, virtually every inch of space is taken, including standing room. Often as many listeners are outside as inside. Many others do not come at all because they know they cannot get near the church. It is curious that meetings were never scheduled in different parts of the city at different hours on the same night or rotated to different parts of the city on different nights—in order to accomodate the crowds. This suggestion was made but the planning committee never got around to it or concluded that "the people prefer to be together," as several persons had said.

The mass meeting pattern is relatively simple: songs, prayer, latest news and plans, a "pep talk", collection. Often the pastor in whose church the meeting was held would preside or, after preliminary re-

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marks, would turn the meeting over to some official of the Montgomery Improvement Association.

The meetings are serious but thoroughly relaxed. There are quips and jokes—a great deal of genial humor. All classes are present in the audiences but the bulk of the attendants are working class people. It is here that morale is built and sustained. Unity is expressed in words and in the little kindnesses that the people show to each other. The automobile-owning folk, who never rode the buses, and the maids and day-laborers, who depended upon the buses, have come to know each other. The inter-denominational, inter-class integration of the Negro community has called forth much comment. Moreover, the mass meetings have given many persons some place to go; something to think about; something to absorb their energies. There is high purpose these days in the Negro community.

Few whites attend these meetings although they are open to all. Aside from a Lutheran minister who has a Negro congregation, no local white preacher has publicly identified himself with the Negro cause. Many, of course, give assurances privately. A few are in "hot water" for real or suspected sympathies with the boycotters.

But the main force that keeps the people and their leaders together is the idea of the movement itself. These people know that they are fighting a big battle and that it is a vital part of a larger war. Messages and money contributions from many parts of the nation as well as from remote parts of the world have confirmed this belief.

At first, the demands of the boycotters were limited—courtesy, fair play, fair employment. These were all within the segregation laws of the city and state. At one point, the Negroes would have called off the boycott for just the "first come, first serve" arrangement. That day, of course, has long since passed.

Apparently to impress the Negro community with what it could lose, the bus company abruptly stopped all service to Negro neighborhoods. This was supposed to bring Negroes to their knees, crying for the buses. But nobody was impressed. Instead, doubtful would-be bus riders were pushed into the motor pool. The water, they found, was just "fine." On second thought, the bus company decided to re-establish the discontinued lines. So the buses were put back on the routes in the Negro areas. They continued to roll empty.

For about a month negotiations were on and off. Neither side would yield. The boycott held its own. This meant that 75 per cent of the bus riding public was "out," and it cut some $3,000 from each day's revenue. Moreover, fewer whites—probably out of sympathy with the boycott—seem to be riding.

To counteract this economic squeeze, the mayor called on the white public to support the buses. The so-called White Citizens Council solicited contributions for the poor suffering bus company. No

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figures were ever given out but the general impression is that very few persons were willing to subsidize the National City Lines, an economic giant that is spread out over the cities and towns of the Middle West and South and has its main office in Chicago. A forced subsidy was made possible by raising the bus fare from 10 to 15 cents. At which point, additional whites stayed off the buses.

V

To break the impasse, the city commission pulled a fast one. On Sunday, January 22, the Negro community was astounded to read in the morning paper that a settlement had been reached. The article said: "The above agreement is concurred in by all three members of the City Commission, as well as by representatives of the bus company and the group representing the Negroes of Montgomery." The terms of the "agreement" were: (1) courtesy to all; (2) white reserve section at the front of the bus, Negro reserve section at rear of bus; (3) special, all-Negro buses during the rush hours. "First come, first serve" would obtain for the unreserved, middle section. The city commision stated that it had nothing to do with the question of employment. The declaration of courtesy carried no machinery for assuring its practice. In short, this latest "agreement" was merely a re-statement of the *status quo ante bellum*. Nevertheless, it sounded like a settlement and many persons who read the story felt that the boycott was over. Some whites were jubilant. Some Negroes were ill. Why had the "leaders" given in?, they asked.

A careful reading of the article raises the question whether it was just poor reporting or something much worse. For example, the names of the "prominent ministers" were not given. Other omissions were equally strange. If this was a release from the city commission, would any newspaper naively print such an important front-page story without first checking with the known Negro representatives, who had been negotiating with the bus company and city commission for weeks? Obviously, this announcement was a calculated maneuver to get the ex-bus riders back on the buses Sunday morning. Perhaps once the spell of not riding was broken, the boycott would dissolve.

The Negroes foiled this maneuver by a combination of luck and quick action. The story had been sent out Saturday evening by the Associated Press. As it came over the wires into the office of the *Minneapolis Tribune,* the reporter Carl T. Rowan, who had been down to Montgomery to cover the boycott, did what any good reporter would do: he called Rev. M. L. King Jr. to verify the story.

King was amazed. He knew absolutely nothing about any settlement. Rowan then contacted one of the Montgomery commisioners who confirmed the story but refused to give the names of the Negro ministers involved. Under prodding, the commissioner did reveal the denominations of the ministers. Rowan then called King again. This clue was

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enough. King and his colleagues by a process of checking soon identified the "three prominent Negro ministers." It turned out that they were neither prominent nor members of the negotiating committee.

It was now late Saturday night. Like minute men, the ministers of the Montgomery Improvement Association went themselves or sent messages to all of the night clubs and taverns in the Negro community, informing the Saturday night revellers of the attempted hoax. Rev. King himself humorously stated that he got a chance to see the insides of many a night spot! Result: word got around so well that the next day the buses rolled empty as usual. At the Sunday morning services, the ministers excoriated the "fake settlement" and repeated that the "protest" was still on. The commissioners lost face. The Negroes were brought closer together.

By the next day, the "three prominent Negro ministers" had publicly repudiated the commission's press announcement. One of the three stated before an open meeting that he had been "tricked" into the conference on the basis of a telephone invitation, asking that he join in a discussion of group insurance for the city. This man said that neither he nor the other two Negroes present agreed to any settlement, declaring that they were unauthorized to speak for the ex-bus riders.

Few persons thought that these three Negro ministers would dare challenge the veracity of the city fathers; but they did. This, everybody was sure, would make front page news. But the local press reduced the sensational disclosure to a bare statement of denial that was buried near the end of a long story. When the local dailies did not print his statement, one of the three ministers purchased space for a three-inch ad saying: "The rumor that is out that I agreed with the commissioners on the proposal that they issued is an untrue statement." These words have never been contradicted.

Things now took a turn for the worse. The mayor and the other commissioners embarked upon a "get tough" policy. With a show of anger the mayor denounced the boycott, declared that the white people did not care if another Negro ever rode the buses again, and called upon white employers to stop taking their Negro employees to and from work. He said that white businessmen informed him that they were discharging Negro workers who were participating in the boycott. All three commissioners let it be known that they had joined the White Citizens Council. Even the timid member of the trio mustered up enough bravado to go on television and join the "get tough with Negroes" act. All this, of course, was the traditional, Confederate, flag-waving appeal to white supremacy.

It was to be a field day. The police would "cut the legs off" the boycott by a campaign of arrests for real and imaginary traffic infractions. Negro drivers, who appeared to be in the motor pool, would be questioned about their employment, the balance due on the purchase of their automobiles and the firms with which they had their insurance.

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VI

For a moment the protest movement seemed to be wavering. Again, Negroes saw that the very instruments of law and order were being used against them. Surely, a man had the right to give someone a ride in his own automobile. Persons who had not received a traffic ticket in years were booked. Some ex-bus riders, while waiting to be picked up, were told that there was a law against hitchhiking; others were accused of "loud talking", walking on lawns and "congregating in white neighborhoods." The daily press printed next to nothing about the wholesale arrests and harassment.

Under such heavy blows the voluntary pick-up system began to weaken. Some drivers were already tired; others disliked "tangling with the law"; still others feared that they could not stand much more provocation without striking back.

The high point of the "get tough" operation was the arrest of Rev. King himself. But if this move was intended to frighten King, it fell flat. He calmly submitted to arrest and jailing. At first, he was not to be let out on bond. The news spread through the Negro community like wildfire. Negroes began rushing down to the jail in such numbers that King was released without having even to sign his own bond.

Meanwhile, a group of Negro business and professional men asked the city for permission to operate a jitney service. This was turned down on the grounds that sufficient transportation was already available. The mayor said, let them ride the buses now rolling empty through the streets. A strange stand for one who didn't care if another Negro ever rode a bus again!

But the city did care. It stood to lose part of the $20,000 in taxes it received from the bus company each year. Downtown merchants cared, too, for some of their businesses were off by as much as a third since the boycott had begun. Most of all, the bus company cared—each day it cared more and more. It let it be known that it would agree to any seating arrangement that the city commissioners would approve.

The worst was yet to come. The inflammatory appeals seemed to give the signal to the violent elements. A stick of dynamite was thrown on the porch of Rev. King's home. The job was amateurish; the damage slight; the intent vicious. Within minutes hundreds of Negroes flocked to King's home; also the police. It was at this moment that non-violent resistance almost faded. Many Negroes wanted to launch a counter-offensive. Rev. King, standing on the front porch of his "bombed" home, pleaded with the angry Negroes: "We are not harmed. Do not get your weapons. Let us not answer hate with hate, violence with violence. But we will continue to stay off the buses." Probably this saved the city from a race riot.

There had been other incidents. Some Negro and white high school students had clashed; one or more cars of white youths had made commando raids on the nearby Negro college, dashing through the campus

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with lights out, throwing out bags of water, eggs, rocks and a tiny flaming cross. One evening the commandos were ambushed and bombarded with bricks. Another commando car was captured by special police. Another clumsy bomb-thrower hit the fence of E. D. Nixon, the president of the local NAACP chapter.

This flurry of violence had no noticeable effect on the boycott. The leaders were careful but nobody seemed to be at all afraid. On the other hand, it helped convince the patient hopefuls that an all-out fight was the only kind that made any sense.

For two months the Negroes had clung to the hope of a settlement on the basis of their limited demands. But the failure of negotiations and the crude brutality of the "get tough" policy convinced the most conservative ex-bus riders that an attack had to be made upon bus segregation itself. Accordingly, on February 1 a suit was filed in the local federal courts, asking for the end of bus jim crow on the grounds that it is contrary to the 14th Amendment of the Constitution of the United States. Furthermore, the court was asked to stop the city commissioners from violating the civil rights of Negro motorists and pedestrians.

This was a sobering jolt for the city commissioners. The "get tough" policy evaporated overnight. The city fathers, who had been making speeches at the drop of the hat, lapsed into their usual quietude.

VII

Meanwhile, a fresh effort was made to re-open negotiations. This time a white business men's club intervened. Many of them had stores that had been hurt. It is estimated that the boycott has cost Montgomery $1,000,000. The business men's club met several times, separately, with the city commission and a committee from the Montgomery Improvement Association. Chicago Negroes had thrown a picket line around the offices of the parent bus company, so it was more willing than ever to come to terms. The city commissioners, however, remained adamant. They seem to feel that they can not afford to yield. So the best that the business men could offer was little more than the old "fake" settlement that had been palmed off on the "three prominent Negro ministers."

Some of the drivers in the motor pool were becoming exhausted. Twelve or thirteen weeks of free, voluntary service, four or five hours per day, is fatiguing. Most of these drivers have jobs and other obligations. Several of the leaders felt that maybe the boycott might as well be called off since in the end the courts would settle the issue. Understandably, people were becoming battle-weary. For over three months, life had been like a military operation for the Negro Improvement Association.

So the leaders, though reluctantly, submitted the proposals of the

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business men to the rank and file at one of the mass meetings. The answer was an almost total rejection. Out of approximately four thousand persons present, *only two* voted in favor of calling off the boycott. The morale of the masses, once again, revived the morale of the leaders.

To date the latest move to break the boycott has been the indictment of the leaders of the Improvement Association. This was based on an old anti-labor law of doubtful constitutionality. And again nobody was frightened. Nobody tried to hide. Many inquired of the sheriff's office: "Is my name on that Grand Jury list?" If it was, the caller let it be known that he would come down immediately. Confident, orderly, loyal to each other, the Negroes again manifested their collective will and *esprit de corps.*

As for the future, nobody can be sure. The white people of Montgomery have been amazed by the group discipline of the Negro community and by the intelligence and organization with which the boycott has been maintained. "I didn't think they had it in them," is a frequent comment.

Many whites who would like to see the boycott ended and who feel that the demands of the Negroes are reasonable, are afraid to admit this. They fear that to "give in" on this means that "all" is lost. There are sincere apprehensions that desegregation at any one point will lead to general racial integration—and that means intermarriage! An absurd goblin hovers over every white household. The politicians and White Councils exploit these fears. The chief weakness of the movement for desegregation is that so little is done to remove the unfounded alarms of the thousands who in desperation are flocking to the hate organizations.

The fact is that desegregation has been magnified so greatly in the minds of so many Americans, both Negro and white, that they do not realize how ordinary and natural a non-segregated society is. Non-segregation already prevails in many areas of Southern life—the super markets, for example—with scarcely passing notice. Negroes seem to feel that desegregation will work overnight miracles. Southern whites feel that it will precipitate disaster. They are both wrong. It is neither so glorious nor so dangerous as pictured, even in terms of the values of the opposing groups. A non-segregated society is merely a crude, basic pre-condition for creating a social order in which the higher sensibilities can flourish.

We are all indebted to the Negroes of Montgomery. They say that they are confident of ultimate victory. In a sense, they have already won. They have given us a magnificent case study of the circumstances under which the philosophy of Thoreau and Gandhi can triumph. Moreover, the boycott movement has brought something new into the lives of the Negroes of Montgomery. They would be loath to give it up. Whenever the boycott ends, it will be missed.

March 15, 1956

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THE NEGRO AND THE CHURCH

Saul Gottlieb

New Orleans

One of the anachronisms of life in this city is the device used to enforce segregation on the buses: a small wooden sign marked "For Colored Only" with two pegs that fit in slots on the backs of seats. This sign is called a "screen," deriving from the old days when chicken-wire screens separated the races on the trolleys. Nowadays the screen is moved back and forth by Negroes and whites, depending on available seats, but no matter how crowded the Negro section of the bus there are always twelve seats reserved for whites, since the screen cannot be moved past the first transverse row of seats. White people frequently ask Negroes to move back so the whites can sit; Negroes rarely ask the whites to move forward.

Early this year 72 Negro college students crowded onto an empty bus after an exciting basketball game, occupying all the seats and standing room and ignoring the screen, which one student may have thrown out the bus window. The driver remonstrated with them, pointing out they were breaking the City Segregation Law, which is posted in each bus; the students answered with cat-calls. After stopping to pick up a white passenger (full buses ordinarily do not take on additional passengers), the driver called his supervisor, who called the police, who called the wagon. At the police station the students were all charged with "disturbing the peace." At the trial the next day the charges were dropped after the driver and white passenger refused to sign affidavits.

Although the Montgomery bus boycott was on at this time, no similar movement developed in New Orleans. I discussed this with A. P. Tureaud, legal counsel for Louisiana NAACP, who said the NAACP is ready to test the constitutionality of such local jim-crow laws, but that the police never give them a chance. That was why the students were charged with "disturbing the peace." As for organizing a boycott, Tureaud feels it would be "impractical" in New Orleans, because Negroes and whites live in such close proximity, because there is no one Negro residential section, and because distances are too great.

Of course, the NAACP has a lot on its hands this year. The state attorney general has filed suit to outlaw the group under an old anti-Klan law requiring all organizations to file annual membership lists. The Orleans Parish

Since Mr. Reddick's article was written, the Reverend King has been convicted, and the verdict is being appealed. Contributions to assist in the magnificent struggle of Montgomery "protesters" are being received at: The Montgomery Improvement Association, c/o Rev. Martin Luther King, 725 Dorsey St., Montgomery, Ala.

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school board is appealing the ruling of the Federal District Court that it "complete desegregation within a year or more." Tureaud predicts an integrated school system here by the fall of 1957, "unless the state legislature gives them opportunities for more delays that will have to go to the Supreme Court."

Nevertheless there seems to be a need for some kind of mass movement among Negroes and whites favoring integration. The local NAACP is not quite supplying that need. It is relying almost exclusively on legal pressures. Its monthly meetings are poorly attended. Whites are not encouraged to join—"we can't screen out white Communists," Tureaud explains. Meanwhile, the New Orleans Citizens Council is going out after 50,000 members and is holding mass meetings, and a special committee of Catholic laymen has been formed to combat the Church's integration plans.

The breach between the priesthood and the laity in this strongly Catholic community is apparently becoming unbridgeable. I say "apparently" because there is such conflicting opinion as to the real nature of the laity's opposition. Tureaud, himself a Catholic, believes most Catholics will go along with the integration of the parochial schools, which have almost as many students as the public schools, though fewer Negroes.

Liberal Catholic friends of mine, however, feel there will be some trouble before the parochial schools are finally integrated. Catholics they talk to are not very worried about the threats of excommunication. It is significant that no one has yet been excommunicated in New Orleans, and that Archbishop Rummel has reneged on his original decision to start integrating the parochial schools this year.

The Church is doing a great deal of the much-needed work of educating people not only to accept integration but also in techniques of bringing it about with least friction. The Catholic Committee of the South has held a number of non-segregated forums, bringing in speakers to discuss such matters as "health hazards," intellectual capabilities of Negroes, and the moral problems white supremacists claim will result from integration. These meetings have been well-attended, but of course do not get anything like the crowds that Citizens Committee rallies get.

Other pro-integration forces are also active in the city. The Citizens Forum on Integration has held three meetings at a downtown public high school auditorium which seats 500. They need more space for the increasing attendance, but the school board refuses them any other school because all others are in "residential" areas.

The speakers it has invited have been prominent educators from Baltimore, Washington and St. Louis where a successful program of integration is going forward. Audiences have been about equally divided between whites and Negroes. Some whites in the audience got up when Negroes sat next to them. Some stood in the back, and a few left in disgust before the meeting was over. But on the whole the meetings have been orderly and productive, with much intelligent discussion during question periods. Between meetings, members of the Forum committee meet with the school board. While they have not been able to budge the official stand of the board,

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they feel they are setting the climate for the day when the board will have to start integrating its schools.

Efforts to coordinate the activities of all pro-integration groups in the city were spurred recently by the Louisiana Council on Human Relations, which called a meeting of representatives of the various organizations. Besides the Catholic Committee and the Citizens Forum, the Rabbinical Council, the Federation of Churches, the National Council of Jewish Women and the United Packinghouse Workers sent delegates.

The presence of the Packinghouse Workers at the gathering was the only indication of labor action on the issue so far. Packinghouse is one of three or four integrated unions in town, and the only one that sent delegates to the Civil Rights Assembly in Washington in March. They have developed a program of interracial adult education in some of their rural locals, as a result of long strikes against the sugar companies in which they won anti-discrimination clauses in their contracts. But some members of the locals are also members of the White Citizens Councils. The unions could be a strong force for public education towards integration, of course, but so far they have not even passed a resolution opposing the school board's stand.

Neither has the local B'nai B'rith organization, though it has passed resolutions approving the original Supreme Court decision. Some B'nai B'rith members are also members of Citizens Councils in Mississippi. The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith does, however, supply educational material on "brotherhood" to many communities in the south "on request," and some of this material concerns racial problems. The director of the ADL here told me his board feels no further action on the problem should be taken at this time by ADL. Individual rabbis have taken action that has stirred up their congregations.

It's going to be a long, slow struggle in New Orleans, but not as long or as slow as William Faulkner and other "southern liberals" think it should be. Integration will be a fact in New Orleans schools within two or three years at the latest. It is doubtful that there will be any serious trouble about it here, but there will be much resistance even after it becomes a fact. This makes the present task so much more urgent—the task of education among Negroes as well as whites. It is a very big task, and the groups now engaged in it have made only the first halting steps toward accomplishing it. Perhaps they need those two or three years.

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REVERBERATIONS IN THE NORTH

Irving Howe

What has been most depressing, and at times downright infuriating, about the recent discussions of the problem of integration is that the terms of discourse tend increasingly to be those of the Southern enemies of equality for the Negroes. And this has been true even for many liberals who sincerely think of themselves as opponents of segregation.

I

A major social and political revolution is taking place in the South. The Negroes are making unprecedented gains in political and economic power —partly as the result of a belated industrialization which, in its need for skilled and literate labor, tends to break down caste lines; partly as a result of the political needs of the United States in the cold war, which makes it mandatory that some genuine improvements be made in the conditions of Negroes; partly as a result of the decades of effort by those very Northern radicals and liberals who (one increasingly hears) are constitutionally incapable of understanding "Southern institutions," and even more, by the effort of the Negro organizations that have fought and suffered in and out of public notice.

What is happening is of extraordinary importance to our entire national life, and I wish merely to indicate it here, without even pretending to a rounded analysis: *the Southern Negroes, after decades of humiliation, are finding their political and social voice; they are acquiring new self-confidence and coherence; they have become or are on the verge of becoming an independent political force in the South.*

The magnificent discipline and self-restraint of the Negro boycotters in Montgomery ("We love everyone," one minister is reported to have said, "but let's keep walking") is surely one of the most encouraging events in 20th-century American life. Indeed, a few decades from now the Montgomery action may be looked upon as a political and social innovation of a magnitude approaching the first sit-down strikes in the Akron rubber plants during the mid-thirties.

Is this not what all of us—whatever our differences of ideology or opinion —have been waiting and hoping for? That the mute should find their voices, that from the silent depths of the oppressed there should arise the claim to justice and dignity?

But to expect a response of unambiguous support for the Negroes is to forget the quality of contemporary American political life, it is to forget that the grey dye of conformity has sunk so deeply into the fabric of our behavior that even the question of

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Negro rights evokes moral bewilderment and opportunism.

Everyone, from President Eisenhower to most of the liberal journals, cries "moderation." But if you inquire what "moderation" means in the circumstances, it is impossible to get a precise answer. Is the cry of "moderation" directed against the North Carolina police who arrested Clarence Mitchell, NAACP leader, for ignoring the segregation "rules," or is it directed against Mitchell for insisting that he is a human being? Is it directed against the Mississippi legislator who publicly advocated bashing in the heads of "uppity" Negroes or is it directed against Autherine Lucy who had the gall to drive up the University of Alabama in a Cadillac and pay her entrance fee with a $100 bill? (No doubt, if she had come in a rickety wagon and paid in pennies tied up in an old stocking, that would have shown the humility proper to a n....)

Along the same lines, one is appalled to notice that in the Northern press, and in liberal journals too, a legend has grown up that the NAACP is an "extremist" organization, so that in the *Christian Science Monitor,* not the worst of our papers, the NAACP and the White Citizens Councils are paired off as almost equally objectionable "extremists." One rubs one's eyes: the NAACP, the middle-class NAACP, always known for its caution, even for an excessive caution—an extremist organization! I have been reading very carefully during recent weeks the NAACP literature and can only testify that far from being "extremist" it is almost unbelievably restrained and moderate in its demands. But it *does* want the Supreme Court decision to be enforced—and what short of that can any Negro organization want?

But even more: to speak of the NAACP and the White Councils as equally "extremist" is to lump together the oppressors and the oppressed, those who suffer discrimination and those who impose it.

II

Well, nothing much more can be expected from the official voices of American society, but surely, one might suppose, on this matter the liberals would speak out clearly. But they have not.

The *New Republic* in its infatuation with Adlai Stevenson—surely one of the great romances of our time!—has been visibly suffering in its efforts to evade recognizing the fact that its candidate has irrevocably disgraced himself on the Negro question. When Senator Kefauver, who is a politician from Tennessee and not a statesman from Illinois, took a more forthright stand on integration than Stevenson, the *New Republic* complained that Kefauver was playing for and with the Negro vote. (It did not seem to occur to the *NR* that Stevenson might be playing for the Southern vote.) Kefauver, the magazine admitted, had taken a "stand-up-and-be-counted posture... on the natural gas bill, the Till murder and Israel," while Stevenson had confined himself to "high-level" speeches. And then, to top it off, the *New Republic* proposed that the "emotional race issue" be dropped from the political campaign. No doubt, this would have made life more comfortable for Mr. Stevenson, as he squirmed between his apparent Southern commitments and his disturbed liberal admirers; but it would also

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have meant to banish the most important issue of our national life from the political campaign.

And then Reinhold Niebuhr, a man of God. Writing in the *New Leader,* he granted that

> we can hardly blame Negroes for being impatient with the counsel of patience... Yet, Stevenson is right [in offering such counsel] ... Prudence is as necessary as courage... The fact that it is not very appealing to the victims of a current injustice does not make it any less the course of wisdom in overcoming historic injustices.

Surely, one might expect something a little more forthright—a little more *moral*—from the foremost exponent in the United States of the Protestant "crisis theology." But Mr. Niebuhr has developed a marvelous intellectual system—the world being necessarily evil, perfection being unattainable, man being inherently sinful—by which his theological right hand *does* know and proceeds to approve of what his worldly political left hand does.

Finally, Mr. Stevenson. I had originally intended to write a piece tracing in detail his shameful twists on the question of integration; the clips lie on my desk; but I confess to no longer having the heart, or the stomach, for it. His record is so clearly opportunistic, so patently appalling that even his most ardent supporters are now a little apologetic. One citation should be enough. Speaking to a Negro audience in Los Angeles, Stevenson had the presumption to say: "We must proceed gradually, *not upsetting habits or traditions that are older than the Republic.*" (Emphasis added.) Has it not occurred to Mr. Stevenson that slavery too was a tradition older than the Republic while segregation is a great deal *younger* than the Republic? And does he not realize that, whatever his excellent intentions, he has here, from motives of political expediency, slipped into the vocabulary of the racists, those who try to work up a home-made anthropology or sociology to justify their prejudice?*

III

The issue is very simple, and those intellectuals who habitually worry about the dangers of oversimplifying might here trouble themselves about the dangers of undersimplifying. The issue is not whether federal troops are to be sent into the South or any other such irrelevancy. It is simply whether a substantial beginning is to be made toward integration, whether the Supreme Court order is to be obeyed or not, whether the Negroes of the South will be granted their rights or not.

And it is an issue that cannot be evaded. For us there is not a moment of hesitation: we stand unambiguously with the NAACP in its struggle, with the Montgomery Negroes in their courageous boycott. Nor is it here a question of being a socialist or a liberal or anything but a human being.

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* I cannot forego quoting, as an instance of how the impulse to political equivocation leads to sheer double-talk, a sentence from Stevenson's recent book. "In *the long run,*" he writes, "segregation and discrimination... will yield *quickly* to the general advance of education." This is on a par with Governor Dewey's famous prediction that 'the future lies before us."

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1. THE NEW TURN IN RUSSIA

Lewis Coser

Reading recent interpretations of the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, one is inclined to feel that they reveal far less about the character of the changes in Russian politics and society than about the moods and desires of those who do the interpreting. Thus, when Aneurin Bevan writes that the Communist parties of the West are henceforth going to accept the parliamentary game and strive for limited objectives within the framework of Western democracy; or when the inimitable John Foster Dulles declares that the Twentieth Congress signifies a defeat for previous Communist strategies (presumably as the result of his superior diplomatic moves), one is inclined to feel that we are dealing here with projections of the political illiteracy that characterizes both the "progressives" and reactionaries of our time—and let it go at that. Yet the recent Russian events, for all that it is much too early to attempt any definitive or detailed analysis, are clearly of the highest significance and they must be taken seriously in their own right as portents of possible major changes in Russian society.

I

"Oh, thank God that the old days are past," exclaimed one high Communist leader to former President Auriol of France when the latter asked his Russian hosts about the meaning of the Party Congress. Even if one allows for possible guile, it would seem that the Congress speeches and resolutions gave expression to similar feelings among the widest strata of Russian society, and that they were, in turn, deliberably designed to elicit precisely such responses. Partly they were a calculated attempt to bring about a stabilization, normalization and "regularization" of the regime; partly, a skilled response by the party leadership to these very desires. The whole population, for obvious reasons, must have felt both terror-weary and war-weary; and those elements in the population to which the Khrushchev regime may be assumed to be particularly sensitive—the new strata of ambitious managers, bureaucrats, state and party functionaries who had grown up during the post-revolutionary and terrorist decades, who care little about ideology and want most of all the opportunity to exercise their

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positions of power without having to fear that they will wake up in Siberia the next morning—these must have been particularly eager for some sort of stabilization.

Stalin died, perhaps of natural causes, at just the moment when he had outlived his usefulness to the totalitarian regime he had been instrumental in creating. To keep himself in power, it now begins to appear, another wave of terror might well have been necessary. The divergent forces of Russian society, long pent up by the terror of the regime and the pressures of the war, were threatening to burst the frame that had thus far held them together.

The survivors and successors of Stalin were his own men; they had proven themselves "fittest" to survive in this society and to climb the hierarchy of terrorism. Khrushchev's name, to mention only the most conspicuous one, had first been heard of in connection with the execution of thousands upon thousands of innocent people in the Ukraine. It took these hardened and cynical men two years to reckon their opportunity—to realize, now that the master terrorist was dead, that they had the chance to restore a certain rationality in the party regime; to allow local commissars leeway for maneuver within prescribed and reasonable limits; to grant a selected inner circle of leaders some freedom of discussion concerning the techniques if not the nature of the regime; to encourage a type of "self-criticism" that went beyond sheer ritualistic ceremony without verging upon the dangerous ground of genuine democracy; to discard idiosyncracies of the dead dictator concerning modern art and music; to introduce a semblance of modesty at the top ("you don't have to clap hands *every* time we appear on the rostrum," was Khrushchev's directive to the delegates who had listened to him for seven hours). But the new leaders did more: they eliminated, or at least severely restricted, the jurisdiction of the secret police in political matters; they attempted to establish regular procedures in government; they agreed among themselves that decisions were to be made in committee; they restored some self-confidence in the party.

The depreciation of Stalin, the revision of his views on history, the restitution to honor of a number of Old Bolsheviks whom Stalin and his successors had murdered, the condemnation of his economic theory—all this had one essential purpose. It was a means of dissociating the new regime from the heavy mortgage of the heritage of the old. Politically speaking, the present leaders are the legitimate children of Stalin, yet they must now try to erase the memory of the father. Without him none of them would today sit in the seat of power; but they cannot exercise their power without rejecting some of the methods by which he won and kept it. Speaking through analogy, the Twentieth Party Congress might be seen as a ritual of exorcism of the spirit of the father who haunts the son, as it haunts the rest of Russian society. But the ritual itself was an inheritance of the father, and one can imagine that if Stalin had been able to watch the Congress from

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some distant point he would have wryly appreciated how well his followers had learned from him the lessons of political duplicity.

II

Yet it would be a profound error to assume that the stabilization which the Twentieth Congress seems both to reflect and to harbinger must necessarily also mean a liberalization of the regime—as so many commentators have wishfully assumed. The ordinary Russian citizen, it is true, can now probably feel a certain relaxation; some of the thousands who have spent long years in Siberian camps may be allowed to return home (though there is no indication thus far that the *institution* of the camps has been called into question); the families of certain Old Bolsheviks may feel a wry satisfaction in their posthumous rehabilitation, for as part of the new stabilization the evils previously assigned to a variety of scapegoats have been assigned to Stalin and Beria. Yet all this in no way indicates that the fundamental mechanisms of power which hold Russian society together have been relaxed significantly. In this respect the greatest importance is to be attached not so much to the fact that a good many of the Old Bolsheviks are being rehabilitated but to the manner in which this is being done. Years ago they were made into un-persons by decree of the Stalin dictatorship; now they are being dragged out of the memory-hole, again by the decree of the party leadership. There is no discussion, no questioning by the "delegates" as to the significance of this change, no serious deliberation, no criticism of the present leadership for *its* part in the murders and defamations. There is only a simple affirmation by fiat—*an announcement*—that Antonov-Ovsenko or Bela Kun or Kossior were not agents of the Gestapo but true and valorous ancestors after all. The basic procedure has not changed, only the machine which made persons into un-persons is for the moment engaged in making the non-memory of un-persons into a declared memory of persons.

The Kaiser has gone but the generals remain—and they show not the slightest indication or intention of relinquishing their absolute dominion over the masses. Government will apparently be, from now on, a more calculable power—but there is not the faintest shred of evidence that it will be any more controllable by the great mass of citizens than it was in the days of Stalin. And in Russia "who controls whom" is, after all, the decisive question.

It is possible, however, that the measures of stabilization announced at the Congress will ultimately have serious consequences not foreseen by the party leadership—that is, that precisely the measures intended to stabilize the regime will lead to an increased instability. But whether this will happen, or how soon it will happen, no one can say with any certainty. The reduction in the average work week, with the greater amount of leisure it will allow the ordinary worker, may in the long run increase his capacity for political and cultural dissent. The rein-

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troduction of certain hitherto forbidden texts (e.g., Dostoevsky) may have significant repercussions among the university youth. The attempt at some measure of decentralization in the economy may increase the self-confidence of local managers. But surely all such repercussions cannot be expected to be heard in the period immediately ahead. Meanwhile, let us guard against confusing potentialities for the future with realities of the present.

III

With regard to the changes in international policy that were announced at the Congress, one is reminded of an old Chinese proverb: "Front door out tiger, back door in wolf."

Khrushchev's cavalier rejection of fundamental tenets of "Leninism-Stalinism" and his declaration that it is now conceivable that some Communist parties can take power by parliamentary means have of course given the CP leaders a very handy argument for claiming that they are just well-intentioned "progressives in a hurry"—but it is also likely to disorient some of the faithful followers outside Russia. Unfortunately, it is likely to have a considerable appeal to various socialist and nationalist elements in both the West and the East, to strengthen tendencies toward a Popular Front and to be a powerful means for influencing the decisive strata of uncommitted and neutralist nations; but at the same time it may weaken the ideological hold that the Communist parties have on the inner core of militants. The new line may make it considerably more difficult to maintain the monolithic character of the mass parties in the West: *it opens the way to further questions.*

The nonchalance with which the Russian leadership has now abandoned its guiding ideas as to the character of the world in which it functions is added evidence of the supreme contempt with which it views all matters of ideology. Far more than Stalin himself, the new post-Stalin leadership regards ideology as a practical convenience. But it is at least open to question whether such an explicit abandonment of ideological ballast will not have serious consequences among the core of hardened party militants in France or India for whom this ideology, even if it didn't deceive anyone else, served as an important means of self-deception and self-justification.

The Russians have served notice that they will do business with anyone who is not directly in the tow of the United States—from Nehru to Nasser, from Tito to the European Social Democrats, and while this turn gives them tremendous maneuverability *vis a vis* the rigid American foreign policy, it also creates tremendous new problems for the Communist parties in the West. The French CP deputies have just voted to give Premier Mollet full powers for a new repression in Algeria. What is that going to mean for CP influence in North Africa? And similar problems may be anticipated everywhere else, as the national Communist parties try again to become entangled in the disputes of domestic power politics.

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IV

The Soviet Union remains a totalitarian society. But the methods of terror which heretofore were the open and visible weapons of the regime have now been relegated to the status of an *ultimo ratio regis*: the might of the men who control Russia's destiny is no longer flaunted quite so openly, it is held in reserve. In international affairs the weight of a naval power may be assessed not so much by the number of battleships that are actually in service as by its "fleet in being"; similarly the Russian elite now relies primarily on its "terror in being."

The measures of the Twentieth Congress have led to a certain thaw of the frozen surfaces of Russian society, they have allowed us to see or surmise certain fissures in the totalitarian ice. Whether one or another domestic force in Russian society will be able to utilize these cracks to its advantage is still an open question. But what is important is that new possibilities are opening up and new choices coming into sight. The stresses and strains of Russian society which until now operated subterraneously are becoming more visible, the antagonistic forces within Russian society may begin to be allowed a certain "play"—which means that the model of a totalitarian society as a totally static world, never a very useful model, will have to be abandoned. We do not pretend to know What Next in Russia, but we can say with confidence that once again Russia is in Flux. MARCH 15, 1956

P.S.: The present rulers now claim that they, Stalin's closest associates and heirs, were just as terrorized as the mass of the Russian people. This may partly be true, but it is also a maneuver to dissociate themselves from their past and to stress their solidarity with the rank and file. "We all suffered," they seem to be saying, "hence we all belong together. Don't repudiate us now." Whether this maneuver will succeed it is too early to say. The news during the last week, especially the fantastic reports of demonstrations in Tiflis apparently in defense of the Stalinist past, seems to indicate the transition might not be accomplished with the ease that had been calculated upon by the new men of the Kremlin.

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2. From the Polish Waste Land

"Poem for Adults" is one of the most remarkable documents of our time; nothing that has yet appeared in print, except Czeslaw Milosz' great book The Captive Mind, *so fully reveals the despair felt by intellectuals and writers at having to live in the prison-house of totalitarianism.*

Adam Wazyk belongs to the generation of Polish poets that started writing before the war. As soon as the Nazis were driven out of Poland, Wazyk helped found a literary weekly Kuznica *("The Smithy") which became an aggressive spokesman for "socialist realism" in literature. For a time he was one of the most ardent defenders of the Polish Communist line in cultural matters.*

The immediate conditions behind the publication of "Poem for Adults" are described in the Translator's Note that follows the poem. We are grateful to the English monthly, The Twentieth Century, *in which Lucjan Blit's excellent translation first appeared, for allowing us to make this profoundly moving work available to the American public.*

POEM FOR ADULTS

Adam Wazyk

1

I jumped by mistake on the wrong bus;
people sat as usual returning from work.
The bus swept down a strange road,
through Holy Cross Street. You are no longer a Holy Cross!
Where are your antique shops, your bookstalls and students?
Where are you, the dead?
Even your memory fades.

Then the bus stopped
at a little square which had been dug up.
The back of an old four-story house
stood waiting its fate.

I got off at the little square
in a working class quarter,
with memories shimmering from the grey walls.

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People were hurrying home
and I dared not ask where I was.
Was I not here as a child, visiting the chemist?

I went home,
like a man who had gone out to buy medicine,
and returned twenty years later.

My wife asked: Where were you?
The children asked: Where were you?
I was silent, trembling like a mouse.

2

The squares, like cobras, hold their beauties high;
the houses flaunt themselves like peacocks.
Give me one fragment of old stone.
Let me find myself back in Warsaw.

I stand like a mindless post
under the lamps in the square,
I praise, I wonder, I curse,
with cobra, with abracadabra.

I let myself go, like a hero,
beneath the compassionate columns.
What do I care for these Galluxa puppets
painted as if for the coffin!

Here young people buy ices!
Oh, here all are young,
their memories hold only ruins;
the girl will shortly give birth.

Here tawdriness takes hands with compassion:
what has grown into stone will endure.
Here you will learn your letters,
future poet of Warsaw.

It is natural for you to lóve them.
I loved other stones,
grey and great
ringing with memories.

The squares, like cobras, hold their beauties high;
the houses flaunt themselves like peacocks.
Give me one fragment of old stone:
let me find myself back in Warsaw.

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3

'Today our skies are not empty'—*from a political speech*

It was dawn. I heard the whistling of jets.
They are expensive, and yet we must . . .
When we no longer want to talk about the earth we know
then we say: The sky is not empty.

People walk here uncaring in rags,
our women soon grow old.
When we no longer want to talk about the earth we know
then we say: The sky is not empty.

Over the ocean in the clouds seethes
the apocalypse; here the passer-by kneels down . . .
when we do not want to talk frankly about the earth,
the kneeling man says: the sky is not empty.

A legion of boys releases doves.
a girl knots a scarf . . .
when we do not want to talk frankly about the earth,
then we say: The sky is not empty.

4

From villages, from little towns, they go in wagons,
to build a foundry, to conjure up a town,
to dig out a new Eldorado.
A pioneer army, a gathered mob.
They crowd each other in barracks, in hostels, in huts.
They plunge and whistle in the muddy streets:
the great migration, dishevelled ambition,
on their necks a little string—the Cross of Czestochowa.
With a storehouse of oaths, with a little feather pillow,
bestial with vodka, boasting of tarts,
a distrusting soul—wrenched from the bonds,
half-awake and half-mad,
silent in words, singing snatches of song—
is suddenly thrust out from mediaeval darkness.
A migrating mass, this inhuman Poland,
howling with boredom in December evenings . . .
from rubbish baskets swinging on ropes
boys run like cats on the walls;
from the women's hostels, those lay monasteries,
sounds of lust and travail. The duchesses
will be rid of their issue—the Vistula flows near by.

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The great migration builds new industry,
unknown to Poland but known to history,
is fed on great empty words, lives
wildly from day to day in despite of preachers—
amid coal fumes is melted in this slow torture
into a working class.
Much is wasted. As yet only dross.

5

And it happened this way: a brown column
of smoke burst from a burning mine,
a gallery is cut off; of the agony below
no one will tell; the black tunnel is a coffin.
The saboteur had blood, bones, hands.
A hundred families mourn, two hundred families;
they write in the papers, or they do not write.
Only smoke wreathing the air hangs over all.

6

In the railway station
Miss Jadzia in the buffet,
so charming when she yawns,
so charming when she pours . . .
LOOK OUT! THE ENEMY OFFERS YOU VODKA!

Here you'll be poisoned for sure,
Miss Jadzia'll make off with your boots,
so charming when she yawns
so charming when she pours . . .
LOOK OUT! THE ENEMY OFFERS YOU VODKA!

Don't go, boy, to Nowa Huta,
You will be poisoned on the way,
be warned by this ominous poster,
in your stomach you have a People's fish:
LOOK OUT! THE ENEMY OFFERS YOU VODKA!

7

I will never believe, my dear, that a lion is a little lamb,
I will never believe, my dear, that a little lamb is a lion!
I will never believe, my dear, in a magic spell;
I will never believe in minds kept under glass;
but I believe that a table has only four legs,
but I believe that the fifth leg is a chimera,

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and when the chimeras rally, my dear,
then one dies slowly of a worn out heart.

8

It is true,
when these farthing boredoms
howl down the great aims of education,
when the vultures of abstraction pick out our brains,
when students are enclosed in text books without windows,
when language is reduced to thirty incantations,
when the lamp of imagination is extinguished,
when good people from the moon deny us our taste,
then truly
oblivion is dangerously near.

9

A drowned man was fished out of the Vistula.
A note was found in his pocket:
'My sleeve is right,
my button is wrong,
my collar is wrong,
but my half-belt is right.'
They buried him under a willow.

10

In the newly painted street of fresh built flats,
mortar dust floats in the air, a cloud covers the sky,
steamrollers flatten the road,
transplanted chestnuts are greening, they rustle in the dusk.
Under the chestnuts run children, big and small,
from the half-demolished frames they take wood for the kitchen.
Fifteen-year-old little whores go down the planks to the cellars,
they have plaster smiles, they smell of mortar.
Nearby the radio plays in the darkness, unearthly dance music.
Night is coming, hooligans play as hooligans will.
How difficult it is to fall asleep in the years of your childhood,
among the rustling chestnuts . . .
Float away into darkness, you dissonance!
I wanted to find joy in the newness,
I wanted to tell of a young street, but not that one.
Have I lost the gift of seeing, or the gift of convenient blindness?
I am left with a short note, with these verses of a new grief.

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11

Racketeers enticed her to a quiet hell
in a retired villa out of town—
she escaped, and wandered through the night, drunk.
She lay on the pavement till morning.
She was thrown out of the Art School for want of a socialist morality.
She poisoned herself once—they saved her.
She poisoned herself twice—they buried her.

It is all very old. Old are the twisters
of socialist morality.

The dreamer Fourier beautifully prophesied
that the sea would flow with lemonade.
And does it not flow?

They drink sea-water,
and cry—
Lemonade!
They return quietly home
to vomit
to vomit.

12

They ran to us, shouting:
A communist does not die.
It never happened that a man did not die.
Only the memory abides.
The worthier the man,
the greater the pain.
They ran to us, shouting:
Under socialism
a cut finger does not hurt.

They cut their finger,
they felt pain.
They lost faith.

13

They cursed the routinists.
They taught the routinists.
They shamed the routinists.
They called in literature to help—
a five-year-old snotty-nosed child,
who needs educating,

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who needs to educate others—
Is this routinist an enemy?
Routinist is not an enemy.
Routinist should be taught.
Routinist should be enlightened.
Routinist should be shamed.
Routinist should be convinced.
He should be educated.

They turn people into feeding bottles.
I heard a clever lecture:
'Without appropriately distributed
economic incentives
we will not achieve technical progress.'
These are the words of a Marxist.
This is the knowledge of the law of realism.
The end of utopia.

No story will be told of the routinist,
but there will be novels about the troubles of the inventor,
of the fears which disquiet us all.

This is a naked poem,
before it is clothed
with vexation, colors and the smells of this earth.

14

There are people overworked,
there are people from Nowa Huta
who have never been to a theatre,
there are Polish apples which Polish children cannot reach,
there are boys forced to lie,
there are girls forced to lie,
there are old wives turned away from their homes by their husbands,
there are the weary dying of tired hearts,
there are people slandered, spat upon,
there are people stripped in the streets by common bandits,
for whom the authorities still seek a legal definition,
there are people who wait for documents,
there are people who wait for justice,
there are people who wait very long.

We make demands on this earth,
for the people who are overworked,
for keys to open doors,

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for rooms with windows,
for walls which do not rot,

for hatred of little documents,
for holy human time,
for safe homecoming,
for a simple distinction between words and deeds.

We make demands on this earth,
for which we did not throw dice,
for which a million perished in battle:
for a clear truth,
for the bread of freedom,
for burning reason,
for burning reason.

We demand these every day.
We demand through the Party.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE:

The above poem was printed in the Warsaw weekly, *Nowa Kultura,* which is the official organ of the Association of Polish Writers and is the régime's watchdog over the activities of the writers and poets in Poland. The "Poem for Adults" was given the main place on the first page, and half of the second page of the paper—which consists of eight pages. Inserted into the poem was a pen-drawing showing a hand covering a lamp. It illustrated the line: 'When the lamp of imagination is extinguished.'

It is known that the editor of *Nowa Kultura,* Pawell Hoffmann, has been dismissed from his post. Wazyk himself is supposed to be free, but, although this poem appeared in the last week of August, not a word written by this normally prolific writer has been published at least until the beginning of November 1955.

The following issue of *Nowa Kultura* contained a rhymed answer to the "Poem for Adults." It is called "A Poem for the Young" and is signed by a Joanna Sierpinska, whose name is completely unknown among Polish writers. The gist of the answer is best characterized by these lines, addressed to Wazyk:

I would smash
this fat, ruddy,
self-satisfied, comfortable
snout.

What explains the publication of this truly revealing poem?

It may be that the thaw which reached Soviet writers some time ago has found in Wazyk a much belated Polish enthusiast. But one must admit that the pure despair of the writer at what Communism has brought to the Polish people goes much further than anything published in Soviet Russia after Stalin's death. It is possible to believe that to emphasize the point Wazyk received

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encouragement from people high up in the Party hierarchy to write a poem critical of the regime. But Wazyk, who is not only a Communist but also a genuine poet, allowed his feelings to get out of hand.

Whatever the explanation for the origin of the "Poem for Adults" and for the prominence it was given in a leading Warsaw weekly, the most important thing about it is the picture of ugliness and despondency which the writer sees in present-day Poland. Written by a leading Communist poet, it will remain a lasting witness of the despair which Communism brings to those whom it conquers, even to those who were its supporters long before the reality arrived.

LUCJAN BLIT.

3. STRIKES IN THE RUSSIAN CAMPS

Paul Barton

The strikes that have shaken the entire Soviet concentrationary system during the past few years are a new phenomenon, and yet, in certain respects, they recall the phase of the development of the camps that came to an end in 1935-6. It will be recalled that political prisoners—or at least those who had been involved in communist opposition groups—had formerly enjoyed certain advantages over common-law criminals and taken advantage of them to carry on intense political activity in the camps that were set up specially for privileged political prisoners.

From 1936 until a short time ago, the situation was the reverse. The special rights of the political prisoners were withdrawn and certain privileges were granted to the "common-laws." Imprisonment in "isolators" became the severest form of detention. The camps themselves came to resemble extermination camps. The death-rate was very high... Any attempt at resistance was nipped in the bud, owing to the terror practised by the administration, on the one hand, and by the "common-laws," on the other. Furthermore, the prisoners who were sent to the camps in the late 1930's no longer came, for the most part, from the ranks of the opposition, but were officials and experts of the regime itself. The entire political life of the camps was thus swept away.

News of the strikes that have broken out in several Soviet concentration camps demonstrates that this period is over and that political life has begun again with unprecedented vigor. It is not yet possible to give a clear picture of these strikes. After the first news of the Vorkuta strike of the summer of 1953, almost each new return to the West of former prisoners has brought additional information. We know with certainty that before the Vorkuta outbreak there was a tremendous disruption in the Norilsk con-

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centrationary complex and that there was an even earlier explosion of the same kind at Karaganda. There is even talk, though without adequate proof, of an insurrection in a northern camp as early as 1948. We have also received specific information about a three-day work stoppage at the Taichet camp in January 1955, a strike at Kirguin (Kazakstan) in the summer of 1954 and another strike at Vorkuta last autumn. There has also been mention of strikes at Magadan, Mouika (on Sakhalin Island) and elsewhere...

IN ORDER to understand the recent strikes, we must bear in mind certain facts. As in the period ending in 1935-6, political prisoners in the camps are no longer subjected to the dictatorship of the "common-laws." In the course of the reorganization of the camps in 1948-9, all prisoners were assigned to camps of various categories, the most important of which were the "special regime camps" for political prisoners, and the ILT's (*Ispravitelno-troudovoi Laguer* — corrective labor camp) for the majority of the criminals. This reorganization has not affected the principle which requires that common-law criminals be treated better than political prisoners. Conditions in the regime camps are much more severe than those in the ITL's. Nevertheless, the reform has greatly eased the situation of political prisoners. Though it has not restored their pre-1936 privileged regime, it has freed them from the nightmare of the dictatorship of the "common-laws."

However, the chief characteristics of the "regime camps" at the present time are not due solely to the reform of 1949. The conscious and systematic action of the political prisoners, particularly of their leaders, is largely responsible.

The reform of 1949 did not completely eliminate criminals from the "regime camps." Moreover, only a very small minority of the non-criminal prisoners were political prisoners in the strict sense of the term. The majority were innocent people, victims of arbitrary police action, such as the kulaks, the Stalinists who were eliminated during the great purge trials, the members of suppressed national groups, etc. Thus, the "common-laws" continued to dominate the prisoners in general. However, their power had no solid basis, as their number was limited. At present, a new feature appears in the situation. More or less organized groups, which are beginning to act in systematic fashion, are being formed among the political prisoners. Their first objective is to break up the dictatorship of the criminals and to win influence over the entire body of the so-called political prisoners...

The observations of the repatriated Japanese, as gathered and recorded by Herbert Passin, are particularly revealing in this connection. According to these witnesses, the critical moment in the life of Camp 13 of Taichet occurred on May 5, 1954, when fifteen Ukrainians who had helped organize the Norilsk strikes were transferred to this camp. Up to that time, the latter camp had been dominated by a common-law prisoner. The newcomers immediately set about changing the situation. In the words of the report, "The camp had been under the control of one of the criminal prisoners, but the Ukrainians organized the camp against him and one night gave him such a thorough beating that he was taken

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to the hospital and never showed up in Camp 13 again."

A SIMILAR battle took place between the true political prisoners and the administration's informers who were planted among the convicts. Here too the Japanese testimonies provide illuminating information. At Camp 5 of Norilsk, where an important strike was to break out on May 7, 1953, about a score of Ukrainians who had been transferred to Norilsk after the disturbances at Karaganda won the leadership of the political prisoners by killing four convicts who were known to be administration stool-pigeons. This act was sufficient to weaken the administration's control of the camp and to impress the prisoners with the force represented by the Ukrainian nucleus.

The sorting-out that took place, after the weakening of the criminals' position, between the so-called and the true political prisoners, was manifested by the way in which the strikes were led. Spontaneous though they might have been, they were led very firmly by secret committees which were unknown to the strikers themselves. The written demands submitted by these committees to the representatives of the authorities came to the attention of the strikers only gradually.

It appears that the strike committees were obliged, at least in certain places, to act in such a way as not only to ensure the success of the strike, but also to overcome the fears of the mass of prisoners. For example, according to the Japanese testimonies, the strike in Camp 5 of Norilsk went through a difficult moment when the authorities announced that an additional three-year term would be added to everyone's sentence if the disorders were not ended.

It is not quite clear how the strike-leaders managed to overcome this obstacle. However, it seems that their refusal to negotiate with the local officials and their demand to be put into contact with representatives of the highest authorities were instrumental in this respect. The satisfaction which they obtained increased considerably each prisoner's self-confidence...

WHAT IS perhaps the most interesting though the least clear problem is that raised by the role of the Ukrainian partisans. As is generally known, a strong secret army, the UPA, was formed in the Ukraine during the war and fought first against the German and then against the Soviet troops. It continued operating for years, but the armed forces of the government finally succeeded in destroying the bulk of its troops. Most of the UPA veterans are now in concentration camps throughout the Soviet Union. They constitute one of the best organized groups among the political prisoners, and they are eager for action...

In several places, these partisans were among the chief strike organizers. At Norilsk and Taichet, for example, it was they who prepared and led the action. During these strikes, a black flag waved over the camps. This flag was the symbol of the anarchist peasant partisans of Nestor Makhno who had won a legendary glory fighting in the Southern Ukraine against the Austro-German occupants and the Cossack chief Skoropadsky until the end of 1918, against the nationalist government of Simeon Petliura until February 1919, against the white troops of General Denikin until the autumn of 1919 and those of General Wran-

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gel until the autumn of 1920, and against the Red Army until the summer of 1921.

One of the witnesses heard by the CICRC investigators, Karl Fischer, the Austrian socialist, had an opportunity to speak at great length with these former Ukrainian partisans during his confinement in the central prison of Alexandrovsk. He describes this experience in a work which he is now preparing. In order to indicate their political tendency, these men, all of whom are very young, simply introduced themselves as Ukrainian nationalists. They displayed persistent hostility towards the Great Russians. But this hostility was subordinated to their chief purpose, which was to create solidarity among all the prisoners, whoever they might be. They themselves set an example. As Karl Fischer puts it, their conduct was such that it could serve as a model. It is also rather interesting that these young men were offended when the guards referred to them as partisans of Bendera, former head of the fascist-minded anti-Semitic group in the UPA.

According to Karl Fischer, the chief activities of these men in the camps and prisons were directed towards destroying the dictatorship of the criminals, clearing out the administration spies and resisting the influence of the incorrigible Stalinists. They also went about systematically "expropriating" those who were rich—a term they used because of its association with the Russian revolutionary movement.

THERE IS every reason to believe that the free population's attitude towards the prisoners has undergone a fundamental transformation during the past few years. In general, there are no longer signs of the ignoble conduct described by Elinor Lipper, Jerzy Gliksman and others who relate how, when they were dying of thirst during the endless transport, peasants offered to sell them water at fantastic prices. This attitude is no longer to be found except among the primitive peoples of the outlying regions...

All statements concerning the behaviour of the free workers during the strikes are categorical about this matter. They were sympathetic towards the strikers and tried almost everywhere to manifest their solidarity with them. However, they did not think of going on strike themselves...

An important aspect of the strike situation was the attitude of the authorities. They tried to maneuver rather than massacre. They obviously did not know what to do. This fact, which was brought out by Joseph Scholmer in his book *Vorkuta: the Story of a Slave City in the Soviet Arctic,* is confirmed by all the other witnesses, European and Japanese alike.

The hesitation of the camp authorities is partly explained by the uncertainty that seems to have prevailed in the entire police force since the spring of 1953. In *Grenzen der Sowjetmacht* (Holzner Verlag, Wurzburg, 1955), Wilhelm Starlinger sums up his observations on the Potma camp. According to him, the rehabilitation of the "murderers in white"—the Kremlin physicians who had been accused, before the death of Stalin, of murdering several dignitaries at the order of "world Zionism"—dealt a terrible blow to the prestige of the regime and of its local representatives. This unsettling of authority occurred not only in the minds of the prisoners; the camp administrators themselves were badly shaken.

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However, their sense of uncertainty was surely not the only factor that kept them from indulging in slaughter. It appears, in the light of recent testimonies, that since 1950 or thereabouts, the Soviet government's attitude towards prisoners in concentration camps has changed radically. Until then, it was completely uninterested in camp mortality rates, which were almost unimaginably high, and simply replaced the dead by additional mass shipments. However, it had to abandon this policy of exterminating prisoners when the supply of recruits began running low. The food, clothing, living conditions and health and medical services began to improve perceptibly. The authorities concentrated particularly on the problem of the high mortality rate. From the changes that have since taken place in the running of the camps we have reason to believe that camp administrators were instructed to keep the rates down at any cost and that they were strictly supervised in regard to this matter...

What we have just indicated is not a pure hypothesis. A testimony on the strike that broke out in the Kirguin camp in the summer of 1954, an account of which is contained in the Social Democrat *Sotsialistitcheski Vestnik* of July-August 1955, shows very clearly how a camp administration can be taken by surprise, can give the order to fire upon prisoners without first contacting the Gulag and Moscow, and then, fearing possible administrative sanctions, can scheme and maneuver so as to avoid, until the last minute, having to inform Moscow of what has happened. The strike in question lasted forty days...

THE LAST REVOLT of concentration camp prisoners before the long period of deathlike silence was the hunger strike that broke out at Vorkuta in the autumn of 1936. This tragic event was described by Boris Podolak, an eye-witness (see *The Regime of the Concentration Camp in the Post-war World,* CICRC, Paris, 1955).

On the initiative of a rather large and well organized group of Trotskyists, and with the participation of other political groups, four hundred prisoners remained lying in their bunks and refused to go to work. In a declaration addressed to the internal police of the NKVD, in which they announced the hunger strike and stated their demands, the Stalinist system was condemned as a ruthless fascist regime. Many other prisoners expressed their sympathy with the strikers without taking part in the strike. The crisis lasted three and a half months, but at the end of one and a half or two months, the strikers could no longer resist artificial feeding, and only about forty of them held out to the end. The epilogue of this drama occurred in the autumn of 1937, when a special commission arrived at Vorkuta from Moscow. The strike-leaders were arrested, along with a mass of other prisoners, and were crowded into a barrack that had been transformed into a prison. After a rapid investigation, they were sent to an abandoned brick-works about twenty miles away which thus became a kind of death-isolator. It appears that by the end of February 1938 it contained seven hundred prisoners. The first mass executions began on the night of May 8th to 9th. Thus, the last vestiges of the political struggle within the Soviet concentrationary world were swept away.

Between that strike and the one

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that broke out in Vorkuta and other camps seventeen years later there was not only the long period of silence. The two rebellions were separated by a veritable abyss, which becomes apparent when one studies the political nature of each.

In the statement of demands drawn up by the present-day strikers, there is no declaration concerning general political questions. One seeks in vain any open condemnation of the Soviet regime, though there can be no doubt as to the hostility that is felt towards it. In addition, their political thinking is unquestionably less articulate than that of the victims of 1936. It was the elite of the October Revolution that was killed off in the 1930s. The strikes of our time are the work of pariahs who are barely beginning to emerge from the totalitarian imbroglio. They are less concerned with general problems than with their immediate interests.

When the hunger strike was launched in 1937, the four hundred rebels were alone in their agony, and their number dwindled from day to day. Some of their fellow-prisoners, though sympathizing with them, continued nevertheless to report for work. Others turned their backs on them. However, in the movement that is shaking the camps at the present time, the strike-breakers are only a handful of men.

It is true that the men who lead the strikes have to maneuver carefully to prevent defections. But, despite everything, the revolt is carried forward by the great mass of the prisoners....

The testimonies that have been collected, both western and Asiatic, seem to establish the existence of an organizing center for each of the strikes that we know about. The necessary preliminary condition seems to have been the breaking-up by the political prisoners of the power that until then had been exercised by the common-law criminals. The events at Karaganda, which date from the autumn of 1952, seem to have marked the beginning of this critical phase in the existence of the camps. The generalizing of the strikes appears to coincide with the arrival of prisoners who had taken part in an earlier movement and, for that reason, had been removed by administrative order.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that these strikes could not have assumed the proportions they did if the action of the leaders had not found a favorable climate among the rank and file of the camps. It is this that gives these enterprises their genuine character of acts that are both organized and spontaneous.

Among New Contributors: *Ramon Sender,* the distinguished Spanish novelist, now living in the U.S., author of *Seven Red Sundays*... *Saul Gottlieb,* a young writer who lives in New Orleans and has contributed to *Commentary* and other journals... *Paul Barton,* a European socialist journalist who specializes in problems of concentration camps behind the Iron Curtain... *L. D. Reddick,* professor of History at Alabama State College, Montgomery, has made surveys of race relations in North and West, has worked in South for past eight years... *Stuart Hampshire,* well-known English philosopher, author of a study on Spinoza... *Melvin Tumin,* author of an anthropological study of Indian life in Guatemala and sociological studies.

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Because of the immediacy and urgency of the Algerian crisis and the repressive movement it has called forth we are advancing publication of the exclusive interview given to DISSENT *by Messali Hadj, Algerian nationalist leader. This was to have appeared in the Summer issue of* DISSENT *which will be devoted in large part to the African continent.*

A VOICE FROM ALGERIA

Messali Hadj

IN HOUSE ARREST*
ANGOULEME, FRANCE

I) How do you view the conflict in Algeria?

I regard the conflict in Algeria as an event which increasingly involves every social layer of the Algerian people and sets into motion the most hesitant, even those who formerly sided with the colonial administration. After sixteen months of armed struggle it may be stated that the development of the situation has equally enlisted the sympathy and understanding of an important section of French democracy. This new phase has clarified Algerian realities.

III) What is your position today? Reconciliation with the French or total independence?

Our position has not changed. We are for complete independence. That is why we struggle to give a voice to the Algerian people so that they may, through a sovereign Algerian Constituent Assembly elected by universal suffrage, without discrimination as to race or religion, choose their own political future and select their true representatives.

Algerian independence does not mean that our country is going to live in total isolation and have no dealings with the French people. However, our future relations with France depend much more upon the French and their government than upon us, for, to the extent that they grant satisfaction to our people's national aspirations our relations can only be bettered.

Once independent, our country will be in need of aid on the economic, financial and technical levels. We are fully aware of this situation and we would like this to be understood at the very moment we are fighting for national liberation so that we might establish good neighborly relations of mutual help and understanding.

* Now exiled by the French governmment to Belle en Mer, an island off the coast of Brittany where he is held in complete isolation from the world.

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III) What role does Algeria play in the larger conflict taking place in North Africa? What are its relations with Morocco, and Tunisia?

By virtue of its central Mediterranean position, Algeria is intimately linked with the Maghreb bloc. Thus, not one of these three countries can be detached and treated apart from the others. That is why we maintain that the Maghrebian problem is *one* and the solution *one*.

This is so true that the insurrectional struggle in Algeria extends beyond its two frontiers despite the internal autonomy of Tunisia and the independence of Morocco. To tell the truth, there are no frontiers between the three North African peoples who have the same religion, speak the same language and hold the same aspirations. It is precisely because of all this that Bourguiba and the Sultan of Morocco ask the French government to find a quick solution to the Algerian problem.

IV) How do you see the role of the American people and its government in this matter?

Until the (French) aggression of 1830, the Algerian government had diplomatic and commercial relations with the American government. Since the time when the Algerian people lost their sovereignty our relations with the Americans, as well as with other powers, have been suspended.

During the Second World War and especially after the North African landings on November 8, 1942, contact with the Americans was resumed. The population of Algiers, which had greeted them as liberators, established good relations with American officers of Syrian or Lebanese origin. The latter chanted the Koran on the Algiers radio and assured our compatriots of the American people's willingness to help them liberate themselves from French colonialism.

The French colonialists did not regard this understanding lightly. They intervened with the Americans to set them against our compatriots. Certain Algerian workers who, at the start, had profited from equalization of wages preached by the Americans, were quickly subjected once more to discrimination.

That is why the disappointment of the Algerian people was so great when it subsequently saw the indifference of the Americans at the time of the May 8, 1945 repressions when 45,000 Algerians were murdered. This disappointment was heightened when the United States opposed putting the Algerian question on the agenda of the United Nations meeting. The speech of the American representative before the United Nations declaring himself against any discussion of the Algerian problem and the words he used to justify his attitude not only disappointed our people but made them indignant. For all these reasons, the Algerians believe that if the Americans promised them freedom at the time of the North African landing it was only to use them as strategic pawns. Today, the Algerian people believes it can count only on itself to win freedom.

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Having said this, I would add that the role of the American government should be to conform to the principles of the United Nations Charter which proclaims "the right of peoples to self-determination." The United States has close ties with France. By virtue of these ties, it should urge France to recognize our aspirations by respecting the principles of the Charter.

At the time when Algeria was included in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization without being consulted and without its claim being taken into consideration, the Americans should have opposed this violation of the Algerian people's right of self-determination.

It also matters much to us that the Algerian cause should become well known among American democrats and socialists so that colonialist propaganda, disposing of immense means, may be counteracted. The anti-colonial struggle is no easy one. This is why we address ourselves to the magazine DISSENT and to liberal circles so that the truth and our wish to live in freedom may be propagated.

The last trip of Guy Mollet to Algiers, the manner in which he was received by the colonists and their behavior with respect to our people demonstrate irrefutably that the "masters of Algeria" do not intend to give up at any price an atom of their privileges and interests. They neither wish assimilation, nor integration, nor any reform. They oppose the government with every possible means to prevent even an examination of the Algerian problem. For them Algeria is a wonderful garden whose sole beneficiaries they intend to be!

It is against such schemes that our people have risen and taken up arms in behalf of liberty and dignity. It is against this that we issue our call to all liberals and to the conscience of the world.

VI What is the importance and consequence of the differences between the various Algerian political parties?

The growth in national consciousness of the Algerian people and its political maturing have resulted in the elimination of all assimilationist movements. This is also true of the national reformists. Today, the Algerian people unanimously aspire to independence.

The struggle of the Algerian people is further clarifying the situation of the political parties and will end by leveling all differences. Thus, all those who do not have a truly national policy as part of their program will disappear from the political scene. On the other hand, those militants who were led into error will, as the situation develops, rejoin the ranks of the Algerian National Movement, a movement which today enjoys great prestige and the confidence of our people.

Taught by more than 30 years of struggle, the Algerian people will not tolerate any political divergence on the fundamental idea of an "Algerian nation." They will not be diverted from their goal: independence, the right of self-determination and the right to choose their own representatives.

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REFLECTIONS ON THE H BOMB

Gunther Anders

1. *The modern infinite. Faust is dead*

If there is anything that modern man regards as infinite, it is no longer God; nor is it nature, let alone morality or culture; it is his own power. *Creatio ex nihilo,* which was once the mark of omnipotence, has been supplanted by its opposite, *potestas annihilationis* or *reductio ad nihil;* and this power to destroy, to reduce to nothingness lies in our own hands. The Promethean dream of omnipotence has at long last come true, though in an unexpected form. Since we are in a position to inflict absolute destruction on each other, we have apocalyptic powers. It is we who are the infinite.

To say this is easy, but the fact is so tremendous that all historically recorded developments, including epochal changes, seem trifling in comparison: all history is now reduced to prehistory. For we are not merely a new historical generation of men; indeed, we are no longer what until today men have called "men." Although we are unchanged anatomically, our completely changed relation to the cosmos and to ourselves has transformed us into a new species—beings that differ from the previous type of man no less than Nietzsche's superman differed from man. In other words—and this is not meant as a mere metaphor—we are Titans, at least as long as we are omnipotent without making *definitive* use of this omnipotence of ours.

In fact, during the short period of our supremacy the gulf separating us Titans from the men of yesterday has become so wide that the latter are beginning to seem alien to us. This is reflected, to take a salient example, in our attitude toward Faust, the hero in whom the last generations of our forefathers saw the embodiment of their deepest yearnings. Faust strives desperately to be a Titan; his torment is caused by his inability to transcend his finitude. We, who are no longer finite, cannot even share this torment in our imagination. The infinite longing for the infinite, which Faust symbolizes, and which for almost a thousand years was the source of man's greatest sufferings and greatest achievements, has become so completely a thing of the past that it is difficult for us to visualize it; at bottom we only know that it had once existed. What our parents, the last humans, regarded as the most im-

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portant thing is meaningless to us, their sons, the first Titans; the very concepts by means of which they articulated their history have become obsolete.*

The infinite longing some of us still experience is a nostalgia for finitude, the good old finitude of the past; in other words, some of us long to be rid of our Titanism, and to be men again, men like those of the golden age of yesterday. Needless to say, this longing is as romantic and utopian as was that of the Luddites; and like all longings of this kind, it weakens those who indulge in it, while it strengthens the self-assurance of those who are sufficiently unimaginative and unscrupulous to put to actual use the omnipotence they possess. But the starving workmen who early in the nineteenth century rose against the machines could hardly have suspected that a day would come when their longing for the past would assume truly mythological dimensions —when man could be appropriately described as the Titan who strives desperately to recover his humanity.

Curiously enough, omnipotence has become truly dangerous only after we have got hold of it. Before then, all manifestations of omnipotence, whether regarded as natural or supernatural (this distinction, too, has become unimportant), have been relatively benign: in each instance the threat was partial, only particular things were destroyed—"merely" people, cities, empires, or cultures—but we were always spared, if "we" denotes mankind.

No wonder that no one actually considered the possibility of a total peril, except for a few scientific philosophers who toyed with the idea of a cosmic catastrophe (such as the extinction of the sun), and for a minority of Christians who took eschatology seriously and expected the world to end at any moment.

With one stroke all this has changed. There is little hope that we, cosmic parvenus, usurpers of the apocalypse, will be as merciful as the forces responsible for former cataclysms were out of compassion or indifference, or by accident. Rather, there is no hope at all: the actual masters of the infinite are no more imaginatively or emotionally equal to this possession of theirs than their prospective victims, i.e., ourselves; and they are incapable, and indeed must remain incapable, of looking upon their contraption as anything but a means to further finite interests, including the most limited party interests. Because we are the first men with the power to unleash a world cataclysm, we are also the first to live continually under its threat. Because we are the first Titans,

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* For instance, the antithesis between the Apollonian and the Dionysiac principle. The former denoted the happy harmony of the finite; the latter, the intoxication found in exploding the boundaries of the finite. Since we are no longer finite, since we have the "explosion" behind us, the antithesis has become unreal.

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we are also the first dwarfs or pygmies, or whatever we may call beings such as ourselves who are mortal not only as individuals, but also as a group, and who are granted survival only until further orders.

2. *The proposition, All men are mortal, has been superseded by the proposition, Mankind is exterminable*

We have just emerged from a period in which for Europeans natural death was an unnatural or at least an exceptional occurrence. A man who died of old age aroused envy: he was looked upon as one who could afford the luxury of a peaceful and individual death, as a kind of slacker who had managed to escape from the general fate of extermination, or even as a sort of secret agent in the service of cosmic foreign powers through which he had been able to obtain such a special favor. Occasionally natural death was viewed in a different light—as evidence of man's freedom and sovereignty, as a twin brother of Stoic suicide—but even then natural death was felt to be unnatural and exceptional. During the war, being killed was thus the most common form of dying: the model for our finitude was Abel, not Adam.

In the extermination camps natural death was completely eliminated. There the lethal machines operated with absolute efficiency, leaving no uneconomical residues of life. There the venerable proposition, All men are mortal, had already become an understatement. If this proposition had been inscribed on the entrance gates to the gas chambers, instead of the usual misleading, "Shower Baths," it would have aroused jeers; and in this jeering laughter the voices of the victims would have joined in an infernal unison with the voices of their guards. For the truth contained in the old proposition was now more adequately expressed in a new proposition—"All men are exterminable."

Whatever changes have taken place in the world during the ten years since the end of the war, they have not affected the validity of the new proposition: the truth it expresses is confirmed by the general threat hanging over us. Its implications have even become more sinister: for what is exterminable today is not "merely" all men, but mankind as a whole. This change inaugurates a new historical epoch, if the term "epoch" may be applied to the short time intervals in question. Accordingly, all history can be divided into three chapters, with the following captions: (1) All men are mortal, (2) All men are exterminable, and (3) Mankind as a whole is exterminable.

3. *Ecclesiastes's, "There is nothing new under the sun," will be replaced by, "Nothing ever was"*

Under the present dispensation, human mortality has acquired an entirely new meaning—it is only today that its ultimate horror

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is brought home to us. To be sure, even previously no one was exempt from mortality; but everyone regarded himself as mortal within a larger whole, the human world; and while no one ever explicitly ascribed immortality to the latter, the threat of its mortality stared no one in the face either. Only because there was such a "space" within which one died, could there arise that peculiar aspiration to give the lie to one's mortality through the acquisition of fame. Admittedly the attempt has never been very successful: immortality among mortals has never been a safe metaphysical investment. The famous men were always like those ship passengers of the *Arabian Nights,* who enjoyed the highest reputation aboard, but whose reputation enjoyed no reputation, because the very existence of the ship was totally unknown on land. Still, as compared with what we have today, fame was something. For today our fear of death is extended to all of mankind; and if mankind were to perish leaving no memory in any being, engulfing all existence in darkness, no empire will have existed, no idea, no struggle, no love, no pain, no hope, no comfort, no sacrifice—everything will have been in vain, and there would be only that which had *been,* and nothing else.

Even to us, who are still living in the existing world, the past, that which merely *was,* seems dead; but the end of mankind would destroy even this death and force it, as it were, to die a second time, so that the past will not even have been the past—for how would that which merely had been differ from that which had never been? Nor would the future be spared: it would be dead even before being born. Ecclesiastes's disconsolate, "There is nothing new under the sun," would be succeeded by the even more disconsolate, "Nothing ever was," which no one would record and which for that reason would never be challenged.

4. *Lack of conscience today is no moral defect, but an objective condition; hence all the more fatal*

Let us assume that the bomb has been exploded.

To call this "an action" is inappropriate. The chain of events leading up to the explosion is composed of so many links, the process has involved so many different agencies, so many intermediate steps and partial actions, none of which is the crucial one, that in the end no one can be regarded as the agent. Everyone has a good conscience, because no conscience was required at any point. Bad conscience has once and for all been transferred to moral machines, electronic oracles: those cybernetic contraptions, which are the quintessence of science, and hence of progress and of morality, have assumed all responsibility, while man self-righteously washes his hands. Since all these machines can do is to

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evaluate profits and losses, they implicitly make the loss finite, and hence justifiable, although it is precisely this evaluation that destroys us, the evaluated ones, even before we are actually destroyed. Because responsibility has been displaced on to an object, which is regarded as "objective," it has become a mere response; the Ought is merely the correct chess move, and the Ought Not, the wrong chess move. The cybernetic machines are interested only in determining the means that can be advantageously used in a situation defined by the factors *a, b, c . . . . . n.* Nothing else matters: after all, the continued existence of our world cannot be regarded as one of the factors. The question of the rightness of the goal to be achieved by the mechanically calculated means is forgotten by the operators of the machine or their employers, i.e., by those who bow to its judgment the moment it begins to calculate. To mistrust the solutions provided by the machine, i.e., to question the responses that have taken the place of responsibility, would be to question the very principle of our mechanized existence. No one would venture to create such a precedent.

Even where robots are not resorted to, the monstrous undertaking is immensely facilitated by the fact that it is not carried out by individuals, but by a complex and vastly ramified organization. If the organization of an undertaking is "all right," and if the machines function smoothly, the performance too seems "all right" and smooth. Each participant, each intermediary, performs or has insight into only the job assigned to him; and certainly each works conscientiously. The specialized worker is not conscious of the fact that the conscientious efforts of a number of specialists can add up to the most monstrous lack of conscience: just as in any other industrial enterprise he has no insight into the process as a whole. In so far as *conscientia* derives from *scire,* i.e., conscience from knowledge, such a failure to become conscious certainly points to a lack of conscience. But this does not mean that any of the participants acts against his conscience, or has no conscience—such immoral possibilities are still comfortingly human, they still presuppose beings that might have a conscience. Rather, the crucial point here is that such possibilities are excluded in advance. We are here beyond both morality and immorality. To blame the participants for their lack of conscience would be as meaningless as to ascribe courage or cowardice to one's hand. Just as a mere hand cannot be cowardly, so a mere participant cannot have conscience. The division of labor prevents him so completely from having clear insight into the productive process, that the lack of conscience we must ascribe to him is no longer an individual moral deficiency.

And yet it may result in the death of all mankind.

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5. *The effect transcends both the cause and the end*

The "action" of unleashing the bomb is not merely irresponsible in the ordinary sense of the term: irresponsibility still falls within the realm of the morally discussible, while here we are confronted with something for which no one can even be held accountable. The consequences of this "action" are so great that the agent cannot possibly grasp them before, during, or after his action. Moreover, in this case there can be no goal, no positive value that can even approximately equal the magnitude of the means used to achieve it.

This incommensurability of cause and effect or means and end is not in the least likely to prevent the action; on the contrary, it facilitates the action. To murder an individual is far more difficult than to throw a bomb that kills countless individuals; and we would be willing to shake hands with the perpetrator of the second rather than of the first crime. Offenses that transcend our imagination by virtue of their monstrosity are committed more readily, for the inhibitions normally present when the consequences of a projected action are more or less calculable are no longer operative. The Biblical "They know not what they do" here assumes a new, unexpectedly terrifying meaning: the very monstrousness of the deed makes possible a new, truly infernal innocence.

The situation is not entirely unfamiliar. The mass exterminations under Hitler could be carried out precisely because they were monstrous —because they absolutely transcended the moral imagination of the agents, and because the moral emotions that normally precede, accompany, or follow actions could not arise in this case. But can one speak here of "agents"? The men who carry out such actions are always co-agents: they are either half-active and half-passive cogs in a vast mechanism, or they serve merely to touch off an effect that has been prepared in advance to the extent of 99 per cent. The categories of "coagent" and "touching off" are unknown in traditional ethics.*

Let us sum up the main points of our arguments. Shocking as this may sound, the murder of an individual is a relatively human action —not because the effect of an individual murder is quantitatively smaller than that of a mass murder or a total extermination (for deaths cannot really be added; the very plural form of the noun "death" is absurd,

* This is not to be interpreted as a justification of the German crimes. The concept of collective guilt was morally indispensable: something had to be done to prevent these crimes from being quickly forgotten. But the concept proved inadequate because the crime in question transcended the ordinary dimensions of an immoral act; because a situation in which all perpetrators are merely co-perpetrators, and all non-perpetrators are indirectly perpetrators, requires entirely new concepts; and above all because the number of dead was too great for any kind of reaction. Just as men can produce acoustic vibrations unperceivable by the human ear, so they can perform actions that lie outside the realm of moral apperception.

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for each individual death is qualitatively unique), but because the individual murderer still can react to his crime in a human way. It is possible to mourn one victim of murder, not a million victims. One can repent one murder, not a million murdered. In other words, in the case of an individual murder, man's emotional, imaginative, and moral capacities are congruent or at least commensurable with his capacity for action. And this congruence, this condition in which man is more or less equal to himself, is no doubt the basic prerequisite of that which is called "humanity." It is this congruence that is absent today. Consequently, modern unmorality does not primarily consist in man's failure to conform to a specific more-than-human image of man; perhaps not even in his failure to meet the requirements of a just society; but rather in his half-guilty and half-innocent failure to conform to himself, that is to say, in the fact that his capacity for action has outgrown his emotional, imaginative, and moral capacities.

6. Our incapacity for fear marks the freezing point of human freedom

We have good reason to think that our fear is by far too small: it should paralyze us or keep us in a continual state of alarm. It does not because we are psychically unequal to the danger confronting us, because we are incapable of producing a fear commensurate with it, let alone of constantly maintaining it in the midst of our still seemingly normal everyday life.

Just like our reason, our psyche is limited in the Kantian sense: our emotions have only a limited capacity and elasticity. We have scruples about murdering one man; we have less scruples about shooting a hundred men; and no scruples at all about bombing a city out of existence. A city full of dead people remains a mere word to us.

All this should be investigated by a Critique of Pure Feeling, not for the purpose of reaching a moral verdict, but in order to determine the boundaries of our emotional capacity. What disturbs us today is not the fact that we are not omnipotent and omniscient, but the reverse, namely, the fact that our imaginative and emotional capacities are too small as measured against our knowledge and power, that imaginatively and emotionally we are so to speak smaller than ourselves. Each of us moderns is an inverted Faust: whereas Faust had infinite anticipations and boundless feelings, and suffered because his finite knowledge and power were unequal to these feelings, we know more and produce greater things than we can imagine or feel.

As a rule, then, we are incapable of producing fear; only occasionally does it happen that we attempt to produce it, or that we are overwhelmed and stunned by a tidal wave of anguish. But what stuns or panics us at such moments is the realization not of the danger threat-

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ening us, but of the futility of our attempts to produce an adequate response to it. Having experienced this failure we usually relax and return shamefaced, irritated, or perhaps even relieved, to the human dimensions of our psychic life commensurable with our everyday surroundings. Such a return, however pleasant it may be subjectively, is of course sheer suicide from the objective point of view. For there is nothing and there can be nothing that increases the danger more than our failure to realize it intellectually and emotionally, and our resigned acceptance of this failure. In fact, the helplessness with which contemporary mankind reacts—or rather fails to react—to the existence of the superbomb bespeaks a lack of freedom the like of which has never before existed in history—and surely history cannot be said to have been poor in varieties of unfreedom.

We have indeed reached the freezing point of human freedom.

The Stoic, robbed of the autonomy of action, was certainly unfree; but how free the Stoic still was, since he could think and feel as he pleased!

Later there was the even more impoverished type of man, who could think only what others had thought for him, who indeed could not feel anything except what he was supposed to feel; but how free even this type of man was, since he still could speak, think, and feel what he was supposed to speak, think, and feel!

Truly unfree, divested of all dignity, definitively the most deprived of men are those confronted with situations and things with which they cannot cope by definition, to which they are unequal linguistically, intellectually, and emotionally—ourselves.

7. *The crucial task—the development of the moral imagination*

If all is not to be lost we must first and foremost develop our moral imagination: this is the crucial task facing us. We must strive to increase the capacity and elasticity of our intellectual and emotional faculties, to match the incalculable increase of our productive and destructive powers. Only where these two aspects of man's nature are properly balanced can there be responsibility, and moral action and counter-action.

Whether we can achieve such a balance, is an open question. Our emotional capacity may turn out to be limited a priori; perhaps it cannot be extended at will and *ad infinitum*. If this were so, and if we were to resign ourselves to such a state of affairs, we would have to give up all hope. But the moralist cannot do so in any case: even if he believed in the theoretical impossibility of transcending those limits, he would still have to demand that they be transcended in practice. Academic discussions are pointless here: the question can be decided

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only by an actual attempt, or, more accurately, by repeated attempts, i.e., spiritual exercises. It is immaterial whether such exercises aim at a merely quantitative extension of our ordinary imagination and emotional performance, or at a sensational, "impossible" transcending of our *proportio humana,* whose boundaries are supposedly fixed once and for all. The philosophical significance of such exercises can be worried about later. What matters at present is only that an attempt at violent self-transformation be made, and that it be successful. For we cannot continue as we are.

In our emotional responses we remain at the rudimentary stage of small artisans: we are barely able to repent an individual murder; whereas in our capacity for killing, for producing corpses, we have already entered the proud stage of industrial mass production. Indeed, the performances of our heart—our inhibitions, fears, worries, regrets —are in inverse ratio to the dimensions of our deeds, i.e., the former grow smaller as the latter increase. This gulf between our emotional capacity and our destructive powers, aside from representing a physical threat to our lives, makes us the most divided, the most disproportionate, the most inhuman beings that have ever existed. As against this modern cleavage, all older spiritual conflicts, for instance, the conflict between mind and body or duty and inclination, were relatively harmless. However violently the struggle may have raged within us, it remained human; the contending principles were attuned to each other, they were in actual contact, neither of them lost sight of the other, and each of them was essentially human. At least on the battlefield of the contending principles man preserved his existence unchallenged: man was still there.

Not so today. Even this minimum of man's identity with himself is gone. For the horror of man's present condition consists precisely in this, that the conflicting forces within him are no longer inter-related: they are so far removed from each other, each has become so completely independent, that they no longer even come to grips.* They can no longer confront each other in battle, the conflict can no longer be fought out. In short, man *as* producer, and man *as* a being capable of emotions, have lost sight of each other. Reality now seems attributable only to each of the specialized fragments designated by an "as." What made us shudder ten years ago—the fact that one and the same man could be guard in an extermination camp and good father and husband, that *as* the former he could be so radically different from himself *as* the latter, and that the two parts he played or the two fragments he was

* Strikingly enough, the very phrase "inner conflict," which only a generation ago was taken for granted, even among the young, today sounds stale, pompous, and implausible.

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did not in the least stand in each other's way because they no longer knew each other—this horrifying example of guilelessness in horror has not remained an isolated phenomenon. Each of us, like this schizophrenic in the truest sense of the term, is split into two separate beings; each of us is like a worm artificially or spontaneously divided into two halves, which are unconcerned with each other and move in different directions.

True, the split has not been entirely consummated; despite everything the two halves of our being are still connected by the thinnest of threads, and the producer half, by far the stronger, drags the emotional half behind it. The unity is not organic, it is that of two different beings meaninglessly grown together. But the existence of this minimal connection is no comfort. On the contrary, the fact that we are split in two, and that there is no internal principle integrating these halves, defines the misery and disgrace of our condition.

Translated by Norbert Guterman

NOTES FROM THE UNDERGROUND

Compiled by Ned Polsky

McCarthy Defines "Fact"

Senator Joseph R. McCarthy charged today that the National Labor Relations Board harbored a "Communist cell." ... He called on the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations to act at once to determine whether the "facts" he presented were "true."

ABC of Economics

It is up to the American advertising business to keep the country's economy moving upward this year, Robert A. Sarnoff, president of the National Broadcasting Company, said today...

"The reason we have such a high standard of living is because advertising has created an American frame of mind that makes people want more things, better things and newer things."

—*N. Y. Times,* February 24, 1956

Things We Never Knew

A would-be F.B.I. agent must combine the toughness of an army ranger with the mental capacity of an atomic scientist. ... This is the essence of the big law enforcement agency's recruitment policy as framed by Director J. Edgar Hoover. —*N. Y. Times,* February 13, 1956

The Religious Life

What is unusual about the new ground-observer post recently set up 12 miles southwest of Dubuque, Iowa?

It will be operated by 60 monks on top of a building in the New Mellaray Monastery. —"Quiz 'Em," *This Week,* February 19, 1956

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The following articles are devoted to the same problem: the meaning of political radicalism in our time. Though written independently, and containing quite different emphases, they raise questions that are likely to be of particular interest to readers of DISSENT. *As usual in our pages, each writer speaks for himself. Mr. Hampshire's article first appeared in the English magazine* Encounter, *with whose permission it is here printed, and was also given as a paper at the "Congress for Cultural Freedom" in Milan last fall.—The Editors.*

1. WHAT SHALL WE DO?

(To some young friends who don't want to play the game.)

Lewis Coser

Among the few successes of DISSENT we count the fact that we have been able in some minor way to establish a link between radicals of an older generation and younger men and women who are untouched and even bored by the rhetoric of the thirties, yet repelled and frightened by the realities of the fifties. In the talks some of us have had with such younger people one theme has been recurrent. They have asked us: "What should we do?" and they did not always mean "How should we engage ourselves?" Very often they simply desired to know "How is it possible to disengage oneself? How can one counter the pressures toward conformity and assent which are so hard to resist partly because they are so very insidious?" We have tried to suggest to them that one of the key virtues in an age like ours may be the virtue of patience, that what may matter most is the capacity to endure. But many have replied that our patience is founded on our political defeats of the past few decades and that it is difficult to imitate attitudes which are the fruits of defeat—especially when it is so easy, and so tempting, to be successful in the world of the fifties.

The following pages are to be understood as an effort to reestablish a dialogue between two generations of radicals, one that has tasted political defeat and another that is uneasy before worldly success.

I

The inscription on the tombstone of Pope Hadrian VI at Santa Maria Dell' Anima in Rome reads: "Proh dolor! Quantum referet, in quae tempera vel optimi cuisque virtus indicat." [Oh what pain!

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How much depends, even for the most capable man, on the time in which he lives.]

Much the same may be said about the relation—and the tension—between American socialist radicalism and a time in which the most profound impulse is conformist and conservative. This is especially true because our age has been so deeply marked by instrumental and pragmatic standards of appraisal that a theory, an attitude, an idea will be judged primarily by the control it permits of the immediate realities at hand, or more vulgarly put, by whether it 'works.' Since radical and socialist ideas manifestly have gained few new adherents, since they seem not to deal with immediate and concrete issues, they are judged to be of no importance.

I wish here to try to show in what sense these ideas *are* of relevance to our day. But before this can be done it is necessary to sketch, even if only in the broadest outlines, some of the reasons why the radical socialist consciousness, quite apart from the reaction it encounters in society at large, suffers from a profound internal crisis.

The explanatory schemes upon which most radical thought has relied in the last century were, explicitly or implicitly, Marxist. Within the general Marxist framework there existed wide varieties of thought, but since this is not an essay in historical explanation I will forego the temptation of analyzing them in detail. Suffice it for our purposes to say that in the tradition in which men of my generation grew up, that is men who came to political maturity in the early thirties, radical thought was anchored in a view of history derived from, though not identical with, Marxist thought. History moved, we felt, in some inevitable way to a final eschaton in a classless society. Those who were committed to radicalism belonged, they felt, to the vanguard of the knowing servants of history on whom it was incumbent to act as the midwives of the coming revolutions; their organizations and groupings were to be like water turbines that would channel the muddy and unruly stream of popular energy, and transform it into an irresistible organized force which would help usher in the reign of freedom. Whether we admitted this openly or not, the here-and-now of our age mattered to us only insofar as it could be perceived as a necessary preparation for the revolutionary days to come.

But the situation in the fifties is profoundly different. Stalinism, Nazism, the decay of the labor movement in the West, have shattered the certainties of most of those who still claim allegiance to radical values. We who prided ourselves on our secret knowledge of the workings of history, suddenly became aware of our ignorance. We have thereby gained in humility and, perhaps, humanity, but we have lost in persuasiveness. The rhetoric of the Marxism of the twenties and thirties had some of the same hypnotic appeal as has the monotonous sound of army units on parade. Humanity marched forward and *we* knew its destination. But most of us today have lost this faith in the possibility of knowing the inner logic of history. The "locomotive of

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history" has passed us by, and as we see it disappear over the horizon in a most unexpected direction, some of us have learned to discard the Hegelian hubris of "knowing" which sustained us for so long.

As long as the myth of the inevitable and iron logic of history served to inspire men to become "midwives of revolution," it may have had a pragmatic validity. But in our day such beliefs almost always turned out to be subtle rationalizations for an acceptance of the historical given or for sterile disregard of present opportunities and options; hence to be not only false but, more importantly perhaps, irrelevant to radical activities.

What then can serve to sustain radical thought if previous schemes are discarded and the immediate present seems singularly unpropitious? And if not now, when?

II

We seem to have arrived at an impasse: maintaining the intellectual models of the past bars radicalism from making any impact on the realities of the present, while discarding these models seems to leave one without any hold in the flux of time, hence condemned to drift with it—even though reluctantly. The temptation is great, therefore, to adopt the stance of those characters in T. S. Eliot's play who "may remember the vision they have had, but . . . cease to regret it, maintain themselves by the common routine, learn to avoid expectations."

That many, perhaps most, former radicals have made this choice is obvious. And if we were concerned with them only as private persons we would be inclined to feel sympathy, perhaps; certainly not anger. The fact is, however, that many of them have not stopped at this gesture of withdrawal from radical involvement, which might imply simply a feeling of defeat and inadequacy. Not content to justify withdrawal as a personal attitude they have elevated it to a principle and glorified it. And in this enterprise they have felt the need to attack and to vilify radicalism, to undermine its justifications and moral relevance, to deny its validity as an attitude or political theory. Not content with maintaining themselves by the common routine, they now call upon us—I use a phrase of Trevor-Roper—to line up as a group of army chaplains to encourage the troops, and to consider radical thought as a kind of subtle conspiracy likely to disturb the ranks.

Yet one may ask whether in a sense much less obvious than is apparent to these obvious thinkers, "negativistic" radicals are not in reality a more "positive" force in present society than the defenders of the *status quo*. Perhaps if we can answer this question in the affirmative we will have at the same time provided some clues toward answering our earlier question as to the role of the radical in the world today.

One common misconception ought to be cleared up: the "negativistic" critic is far from indifferent to the fate of his culture and society. Just because the radical holds an exalted vision of what man

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could be, just because he believes in the creative possibilities of man, he attacks a society which alienates and distorts the human personality. His very criticism of contemporary culture reveals indeed his intimate relatedness to the human beings that live within it. If the radical is concerned with the quality of our lives, if he criticizes the spuriousness and hollowness of our culture, it is out of a sense of intimate involvement, not of aloofness. The act of criticism implies a positive recognition of its object at least in the sense that it is thereby recognized as worthy of criticism. What is utterly alien will not become an object of criticism, it will simply be regarded with indifference. In this sense, then, passionate criticism of a culture may be said to be an index of passionate involvement with its fate.

But even though it may be granted that the radical critic acts from motives which are not entirely despicable, it may still be felt that the results of his thinking and activity are disastrous. Have we not seen in our time so many catastrophes provoked by men who acted from pure motives?

If we do indeed live in a time of trouble, must not one direct all his energy to combat the barbarians from without, close ranks, and see to it that whatever remains of human culture is preserved against the totalitarian onslaught? To the extent that radicals refuse to join the ranks, are they not thereby helping to facilitate the victory of the totalitarian enemy?

This argument cannot be denied a certain persuasiveness, especially in days when the Russian Empire seems continually to be making further inroads upon a West that is immobilized, petrified and incapable of constructive action on a world scale. But it is a fallacious argument. One cannot combat the barbarians from without by making a pact with the barbarians from within (which does not imply, by the way, that they are necessarily to be equated or that they cannot be distinguished). And the tycoons of the amusement industry, the military and corporate elites with their millions of hangers-on in the suburbs and their sycophantic engineers of consent, corporate lawyers and Washington bureaucrats do not defend, they undermine the basis of a culture of autonomous men.

Furthermore, to the degree that the West, like the late Roman Empire, becomes (as Huizinga once wrote) "a facade, eaten from within," it is impossible to make an alliance with those who, whether from ignorance or malice, encourage us to believe that it is in fact a healthy organism. There must have existed in the Second Century A.D. men not too dissimilar from the "liberal" acclamation brigade who in our age shout from every A.D.A. rostrum that things are fundamentally sound, one must be constructive and moderate, and in any case some minor reforms will set things right. After all, there was more general prosperity in the Empire during the Second Century than the world had seen up to that time. Not to mention the bread and circuses provided to keep the poor in a state of pleasant euphoria . . .

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It is indeed exceedingly difficult even to engage in a dialogue with men who have not been able to understand the urgency of the crisis of our age. What is one to say to people who, when told that the foundations of modern culture are shaking, answer in terms of 90 per cent parity, welfare payments and bipartisan foreign policy?

III

What then is a radical to *do?* Above all, it would seem to me, he must be concerned with maintaining, encouraging, fostering, the growth of the species "radical." If it becomes extinct, our culture will inevitably ossify from want of challenge. But members of the species find it hard to grow in a cold climate. They too easily become stunted, deformed, cranky and dyspeptic, and when they are kept isolated for too long they become oddities and freaks—and the "healthy" and "adjusted" members of the crowd can point gleefully to their obvious sickness, and thus find added justification for heading for the suburbs. The species ought to be preserved, I say, and it can be preserved only through mutual contact, interchange, discussion, human communication and the warmth of fellowship. Hence the need, wherever possible, to build little oases of radical thought, small enclaves in a conformist world where critical values are honored and where radical individuals can find intellectual as well as emotional support. But this alone would be hardly sufficient. Radicalism cannot simply become a mutual protection society against the world. At this point we need return to what was said earlier about the tendency of the old radical movement to discount the present in the name of the future. In that movement the here-and-now was almost always given low status: it was valued only to the extent that it could be said to contribute to the unfolding of the revolutionary potentialities of the future. Here, it would seem, a most radical reversal of time perspective is in order. The present activities and options of radicals are crucial, regardless of whether they will be "vindicated" by the future. The moral status of an action in the present is not impaired or enhanced by future history. Neither, I believe, is present radical action necessarily predicated upon the view of future possibilities that one may hold.

Among the contributors to DISSENT are some who feel—as I do not—that America is still going to face an economic crisis similar in proportion or even larger than the depression of the thirties and that under such conditions the expectations of the earlier radical movement can yet turn out to be realistic, if premature, forecasts. Others may feel that the far more probable outcome of the trends of the present is some kind of atomic garrison state, presided over by the combination of staff sergeant and clerk of whom de Tocqueville wrote a century ago. But such disagreements on future trends have made very little difference in our general assessment of the current scene and the options it offers. This would seem to indicate that variant expectations as to the main drift of the future among at least one group of radicals are of but small

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weight in determining their conception of their present role and task. It is only when, as in much of the old movement, the present is systematically denigrated that future orientations assume a crucial role (as when present murders and cruelties are "justified" by reference to their "necessity" in the preparation of "tomorrows that sing"). If one assumes, on the other hand, that one is to judge oneself and is to be judged by others on what one does right now, quite apart from any "historical justification," then agreement on the present overshadows by far the variations in future expectations that may exist.

The radicals of today need consider it their principal task, it would seem to me, to help *écraser l'infâme* rather than to prepare forever for tomorrows that may turn out to be replicas or caricatures of yesterday.

To contribute even in some small measure to the struggle against the infamy of the present may seem a sisyphean task—especially if it be undertaken with no illusion of certain success in the future. I will readily grant this. But then those who are engaging in radical activities with an ethic of success, even of "historical success," have made a mistaken choice anyway. Perhaps, as David Riesman pointed out in his early writings, we do indeed need the "nerve of failure."

All the above is, of course, not meant to imply that radicals have no hopes for the future; they are radicals, among other things, because they believe in the "perfectability of man," that is, the possibility of major change in the quality of human life as it unfolds in history. My intention is simply to warn against a particular type of orientation which denigrates the here-and-now in the name of future history.

But such eschatological views once discarded, what remains to sustain our action in the immediate future? Certainly not the hope in a proximate resurgence of mass movements. There is at present no significant social force in American society which could provide a "social basis" for a new radicalism in the same manner that the labor movement provided, or was thought to provide, a basis for the radicalism of an earlier movement. But even more significantly, it is difficult as yet to imagine what could be the organizational correlate of such new radical thought.

To the extent that the old radical movement centered its hopes in the working class and found in that class and its organizations natural allies and supporters, there existed, so to speak, an organic alliance between the striving for justice, for fraternity, and for the good society of the socialist radicals and the more limited demands of the labor movement. (I am, of course, aware that there was nevertheless a perennial tension between "trade union consciousness" and radical socialist consciousness.) But the new radical in his fight against the new barbarians must be concerned with issues wider and deeper than those of the old movement. He feels that the dangers of progressive cretinization via the mass media are as serious a problem as economic deprivation; that the struggle for civil and intellectual liberties is as important as the struggle for industrial democracy; that the increasing rates of men-

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tal disorders are as significant signs of the decay of modern culture as economic injustice; and that the general alienation of men in modern society is as pervasive in the sphere of leisure as in the sphere of work. But what are the organizational correlates of all such concerns? One can organize workers against exploitation, but how is one to organize those who are psychically exploited by the engineers of consent?

I am not aware that anybody has yet found answers to such questions. As a matter of fact few have even learned to ask the questions. Very few have as yet understood that an argument couched in the terminology, say, of psychoanalysis may be as significantly radical an argument as one couched in the language of economics or "historical materialism." The crisis of culture in our times is no longer an economic, a social or a cultural crisis; it is a total crisis. But even the adversaries of the *status quo* are only dimly aware as yet of this crucial fact.

IV

One pointer, admittedly still most tentative, as to the possible direction of thought on this question, should be drawn here. It would seem to me that among the central questions—and the central tasks—of the coming period will be an attempt to increase the area of personal and social control. On the individual level it has become more and more difficult to control one's own life, one's own thought, one's own feelings. Under the bombardment of the mass media, and the coercive pull of those who control the instruments of power, the individual leads an ever more difficult struggle to be himself. To safeguard one's self, one needs to become impervious to the barrage of directions and signals that the social environment continuously beams at one. It could well be that one of the most significant contributions of a radical movement of the future will be to allow at least some men to fight their way to personal autonomy, and to provide the means by which such autonomy can be achieved. The radical in such a view may be said to assume the role that 18th-century thinkers liked to attribute to visitors from far off civilizations; by questioning the rationale of the insane acts of men of power, by pointing to the fact that perhaps the emperor really has no clothes on, they may allow men to keep their sanity and hence their autonomy, to control themselves instead of being controlled.

Similarly it might well be that the political and social struggles of the future may revolve not so much upon the quest for adequate "standards of living," but rather around the fact that even though immediate material problems may be near solution, many have no control over their social lives. Perhaps to a radical movement of the future the fact that, say, one Henry Luce or David Sarnoff possesses the means for directing the minds of millions, that a very few members of the corporate and bureaucratic elites control the bulk of economic life, will be of much more crucial significance than the standard of living. In fact, questions that have recently come to the fore in the labor movement concern the control of decision-making: production schedules,

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firing, hiring, layoffs, rather than simply wage rates. Perhaps a new kind of labor movement with which a new radicalism could make an alliance resembling their alliance of old, would be one that would put control over industrial and governmental decision-making in the forefront. It would then be possible to link concern with personal and with social control, to affirm that autonomous men can grow only in a social climate in which social control is institutionalized through appropriate organizations. In other words, responsible determination of one's personal life may perhaps be linked with responsible co-determination in public life.

But all these are admittedly vague indications only. We are still faced with the insistent question: What should we do now?

I must admit that this question sometimes annoys me more than a little. It seems to imply that critical thinking is somehow not an important activity, that "mere thinking" is somehow to be given a low status. But it also seems to lose sight of the fact that sometimes and in some places it is a tremendously significant act to stay sane and to stay alive. When the Abbé Sieyès was asked after the French Revolution what he had done during the terror, he is said to have answered "I stayed alive, Sir." It might be that the most significant answer that radicals could give in the future to a question about their "action" in our period would be "I stayed alive, Sir and I remained sane." To stay sane in an insane society may indeed require the most sustained emotional and intellectual efforts that a man is capable of.

But to insist merely on sheer survival would seem an adequate response only in those societies in which totalitarian tendencies are so far advanced that effective public action is no longer possible at all —and American society is by no means a totalitarian society. Despite the growing trend toward tightening, firming up, and coordinating the social structure, there are still enough fissures, gaps and contradictions in American society to allow radical public voices to make themselves heard. Hence, in all those areas of public life in which autonomous men can still make an impact, radicals should act. They can point out the sham of liberal rhetoric and conformist behavior, of democratic theory and bureaucratic practice—and this not only within the body politic but in all those organizations and groupings of which they are a part. It may be as significant to fight for autonomy in a bureaucratically-run labor union as it is to fight for civil liberties against the McCarthys and the Brownells. And to struggle for the civil and human rights of an obscure Negro in Mississippi may be as meaningful a social act as the more spectacular involvements that marked an earlier period. It may be correct to say that in a political sense certain types of activity have more specific weight than others because they take place in areas that are of crucial significance in the struggle for power. But at present radicals are not involved in struggles for power, and on an ethical plane it is preposterous to discriminate between an injustice in a crucial and a less central area of public life.

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Wherever the infamy, the coercions and the horrors of modern society manifest themselves, there may be a field of radical activity; wherever the weaker attempt to stand up against the stronger, in the plant, the union, the university, the bureau or the laboratory—there is a field for radical action.

Still, one may conceivably be critical of present society and yet not be a radical. In fact, some of the more effective indictments of modern culture have come from conservative critics whose rejection of the present is rooted in a desire to return to a more ordered and structured past. Hence, it should be added at this point, that, as E. V. Walter has argued in these pages, "he who denies human 'perfectability' is an immoral moralist because he prevents it from becoming real." In other words, a critic of modern society who attacks its disorders from a desire to reestablish a firmer tutelage over man, has nothing in common with a radical critic who sees such tutelage as an insult to human dignity. There are indeed pages of Karl Marx that read like something out of de Bonald, as there are pages of Orwell that read like something out of Ortega y Gasset—yet their common horror about the trends and potentialities of the present stems from diametrically opposed views of man and his social world. There is no common ground between tutelage and fraternity.

We have used the term radical somewhat interchangeably with the word socialist, and this was no oversight. It would seem that, besides the need to develop and rethink the theory of socialism, no mean task in itself, the proximate goals and the means of the socialists *in America* largely coincide with those of radicals who do not consider themselves socialist. (I know, I know things are different in Britain and in India, but I write about America!) Socialists may be able to rebuild in the years to come the image of socialism as a fraternal utopia that the experiences of the last few decades have so cruelly shattered. They may be able to develop a more coherent theory of social control, popular participation, direct involvement in decision-making in a planned society than is presently available. Beyond that their task will, for the time being, remain essentially a critical one. But again, to avoid being dupes, to refuse consent, are eminently positive acts, necessary prerequisites for any wider activity.

In the last issue of DISSENT Irving Howe quotes a moving fable from Ignazio Silone's most recent novel, which bears repeating here: the peasants in the community Silone describes had been in the habit of blowing an old trumpet to call one another together when their misery became intolerable. The Communist Party tries to appropriate the trumpet but the resourceful peasants keep it from the Stalinists through many a ruse. When will the trumpet blow again? "How can I know?" answers a peasant. "It doesn't depend on me, you know. Maybe next year, or twenty or five hundred years from now." But it is essential that the trumpet remain.

Does possession of a rusty old trumpet, which moreover may never

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be blown, seem meager consolation? But it isn't the trumpet that really matters, it is what its possession symbolized to the peasants. Their human dignity and their endurance was sustained, their inner strength multiplied not by possession of the trumpet but by a communality of belief in man's capacity to come into his own, which was made possible for them by their common feeling about the trumpet and which therefore reflected itself in their daily lives.

2. THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING RADICAL

William J. Newman

The question, why be radical?, is more urgent today than in those more stringent times when radicalism tended to be instinctive. Especially for the intellectual who finds easy employment in a time of know-how-to-no-purpose, the question is pressing and doubly pressing if he was of the generation of the 1930s. It is tempting *not* to be radical today as a simple means by which the intellectual firebrand of the 1930s can rid himself of a past which seemingly clutters up the present. Yet the question remains. And if there are many reasons to justify radicalism, for an intellectual who carries the imprint of the 1930s there is one necessity which now seems especially relevant —the necessity of asserting the values of an intellectual way of life.

Today radicalism has the appearance of quaintness. And indeed, why not? Stickily entangled in the cocoon of Republican prosperity and Democratic mediocrity, one may feel it difficult to credit the relevance of radicalism to the 1930s, let alone to the 1950s.

The lack of "issues" apart (and this is an argument which is less valid than it appears; there are plenty of things to complain about if that is all one wishes to do), it is difficult to be critical and even sarcastic about a political and economic system whose main weapon is to cloy the senses with a succulent, velvety, gummy unreality. Free gifts instead of freedom will solve any problem which happens to be lying around: e.g., the Ford grant to colleges will allow us to burke the whole problem of higher education. (If the professors can't win a prize on the $64,000 program, then it will be made up to them by some other corporation.) The hard edges of reality have become softened and soggy so that it now yields to the slightest material desire; it envelops and surrounds the citizen in a sticky, perfumed embrace in which the urge to struggle ceases to exist. The irascible man has no place in the America of 1956; his only recourse is to go to a psychiatrist—if he can afford it—and get his bad temper removed. Then, too, refusal to accept the *status quo* is quite obviously bad taste. The unreal

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maze-life of Kafka has come into existence and politics is now nothing more than a part of the maze—shoptalk with no end but itself.

It is this atmosphere of futility and dream which creates the basic difficulty of being radical, not the lack of "issues" or "crises." There is no lack of problems, but how can they be described, let alone solved, when the ad-man grins and pulls you into the cocoon?

IT IS TRUE that there are more rarefied theories as to the political impotence of the intellectual-who-was-once-radical. David Riesman has postulated some high-flown reasons in "The Intellectuals and the Discontented Classes" (reprinted in *The New American Right**). The intellectuals, he says, are out of touch with the *new* discontented classes which are composed of the new *middle* classes; the intellectual does not lead the discontented classes as he did in the 1930s (a somewhat questionable assumption). *Ergo:* the intellectual should once again take over leadership, but this time of the discontented middle classes. One reason given is that this would be the *safe* thing to do since these are the classes which will seek to attack the intellectual. This romantic theory of capitulation for the sake of ease fits well the prevalent atmosphere of America today; presumably the intellectual will go on his soapbox again, but this time instead of standing on a cold and windy street corner, he will be snug and warm in the living room of a women's club patiently explaining a "way of life" to them.

One would like to think that Mr. Riesman is pulling our leg. But it is not so. Some of the other writers in *The New American Right* indicate that this simple-minded viewpoint is characteristic of certain ex-radicals. This curious book does in fact prove one thing at least; that it is not the suffocating atmosphere of America alone which is responsible for a near debacle of the intellectual and radical, but rather the intellectuals' inadequate understanding of the meaning of radicalism.

The New American Right is a brilliantly unconscious revelation of this weakness. Supposedly it is an attempt to explain the new approach to politics called "status politics"—an analysis which, we are told by the editor, Daniel Bell, is to replace Marxism. So be it. As a method of analysis it has much to recommend it. But more significant than the idea of the status struggle as a determinant of political behavior is the obvious concern of the writers before this fact of American life. The struggle to attain status would seem to set up social strains in somewhat the same way the Marxist class struggle does. They are different strains but the effect—of a society at odds with itself—is much the same. And the consequent threat to democracy is much the same. Insofar as these writers are correct (and too much of their material rests on vacuous generalizations) the status struggle in particular forms is worth consideration for its political effect; and these writers try to give it serious consideration. They are in fact deeply bothered not only by the McCarthy

* See also winter issue of DISSENT for a discussion by Bernard Rosenberg of *The New American Right*.—Ed.

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threat but by the more permanent malaise McCarthy represents. And yet as writers who are writing a political tract (in the best sense of the word) instead of, or as well as, a work of analysis they are incapable of facing up to the political implications of their own study—that in times of prosperity bourgeois capitalism threatens democracy just as it does in time of economic crisis. In the first case the threat comes from letting loose a struggle for power and position which shatters the nation and in the second case it comes from incapacity to produce. Most of the writers in *The New American Right* have a judicious and grave concern with the effects of the status struggle, but it is rendered impotent simply because they accept the standards and values of the bourgeois society which produces this struggle. Since they do accept these values, they must perforce accept the status struggle and all that it entails. They may wring their hands in despair but more than that they cannot do.

The insipidity of this approach to their subject is most apparent in the case of the editor's introduction where Daniel Bell draws what he considers to be the logical implications of the book's analysis:

> The essays in this book are primarily analytical. Yet they also point implicitly to a dangerous situation. The tendency to convert issues into ideologies, to invest them with moral color and high emotional charge, invites conflict which can only damage a society... The saving glory of the United States is that politics has always been a pragmatic give-and-take rather than a series of wars-to-the-death. One ultimately comes to admire the 'practical politics" of a Theodore Roosevelt and his scorn for the intransigents... Democratic politics is bargaining and consensus because the historic contribution of liberalism was to separate law from morality.

Madison is now elevated for his political wisdom; so is Calhoun for his ideas on how to check a majority.

> It [representative government] is the only way of providing the "concurrent majorities" which, as Calhoun knew so well, were the solid basis for providing a check on the tyrannical "popular" majority.

Such fears of the popular majority are enlightening, to say the least. It is not a rational skepticism; it is a *fear* which haunts the book. That is why Riesman tells the intellectual to visit the women's club. The solution is simple: *avoid ideology*. For ideologies are for those who want to change the status quo, not to preserve it.

Richard Hofstadter in an essay, "The Pseudo-Conservative Revolt," tells us that the Liberal is now Conservative. He should know. But this he does not say: as a Conservative, the Liberal is dedicated to the conservation of a bourgeois civilization with its whole ad-man scale of values and to the conservation of all the values in which we are caught today. *Such acceptance does not give the intellectual any ground from which to criticize the values of his civilization: his role is that of the passive spectator explaining to other passive spectators what is happening.*

Part of this reluctance to see bourgeois society for what it is results

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from the fact that the American-intellectual-who-was-radical is now a part of the American clerisy, as Marcus Cunliffe has pointed out in *Encounter* (May, 1955). One doesn't like to say that this type of intellectual has been bought off; on the other hand, one doesn't like to say that he hasn't been bought off. Let us just say—not that he is "tired": this old excuse doesn't hold water in view of the long hours he spends for his boss—but rather that he functions comfortably and neatly within the cocoon. In conforming to bourgeois standards he has got his reward: a job, the occasional illusion of power, a garden and a Ford grant. If he has any complaints, he too can become a pressure group, as Daniel Bell suggests. As scribbler to the great, he has become the technician of the Age of General Motors and United States Steel. Techniques are what he spends his time on; not ideas.

THE INTELLECTUAL HAS BECOME the expert. This process of degradation has gathered speed in a prosperous bourgeois civilization since brains are as useful a commodity as any other—provided, of course, like any other commodity, they are kept under control. The intellectual is now an individual the government, or big business, or the Ford Foundation can turn to if it wants to find out something about Southeast Asia, nuclear physics, African unrest, or strategic bombing. If, of course, he strays beyond the confines of his subject he is ejected: e.g., Oppenheimer.

All this isn't to say that the intellectual lacks courage. It is simply to say that he has not made the intellectual analysis which would tell him how to use his courage. When the chips are down, Bell, Hofstadter, Riesman, *et al* will stand up and be counted. But when the chips are down it will be too late. For here and now the liberal/radical man-of-goodwill has forfeited—willingly and not under duress—his right and obligation to criticize and negate. As C. Wright Mills has said: the liberal fought a fight for free speech during McCarthy's wild ride, but then found he had nothing to say. Radicalism is not something to be kept in the suburban deepfreeze for a future crisis: we can do without the future crises, thank you, and it will be a sad day when the liberal/radical hopes for catastrophe as a means of giving him something to say. Radicalism is rather a point of view with which to fight the miasma of today on any plane you choose. We may not have a crisis today but we have something less tangible and more dangerous. But the new view, as one comes across it in *The New American Right* and similar writings, is evidently that not only do the ideas of the radicals of the past have no relevance today but they didn't have any relevance in the past. America has always been "different." Ideas are old hat, anyway: *avoid ideology*.

But unfortunately for the new view ideas are the one characteristic which identifies the intellectul. This is what marks him out as a distinct member of any society—even in America where ideas are at a discount. Therefore, to avoid ideas or even their dangerous but necessary structuring as ideology is to cease to be an intellectual and to become

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an expert, a technician, a member of the clerisy. Only by using ideology and/or a philosophy as a critical analysis of man and society can the intellectual fulfill his function as the man concerned with ideas as such. And only in this way—by realizing his function—can he achieve and maintain his independence in a bourgeois civilization.

This, as I see it, is the importance of being radical. Particularly for the intellectual. Radicalism has served the intellectual well, but not as a dogma giving him leadership of the masses, or as the means of bringing bread to the poor, as Riesman naively assumes. There are, perhaps, times when it can give him political power. But its basic function for the intellectual has been the more significant one of maintaining the integrity of the intellectual *qua* intellectual. It is one aspect —and only one aspect—of the intellectual's fight to be an intellectual, to deal with ideas as he alone sees fit. It is the political aspect of the intellectual's need to roam as he will—even in a bourgeois civilization. This independence is always precarious and threatened by many things. There are no permanent victories in this field. But today, the threat in America comes from the specific bourgeois values which is the atmosphere of America, 1956, and which are *of necessity* different from the values of the intellectual. In the cocoon in which we are suspended today, an attempt to assert these values grows more and more difficult. It is not impossible: it is being done. But it will not be done for long if the intellectual follows Daniel Bell's advice and avoids ideology and controversy.

Of course ideas are dangerous: of course ideologies are particularly open to misuse. But the necessity to choose is something more than an existentialist cliché. And choice demands values. The American intellectual is notoriously skittish in front of values. But since he perforce has values, surely it is better to hold them with some sophistication. If today one's values are those of the bourgeoisie, then choice is easy, automatic and painless. If, however, one's values are those of the intellectual for whom ideas are the greatest value, then it will be necessary to make some more difficult choices and to bend the mind to some more difficult problems. It will be a choice in which political radicalism subserves the purpose of an intellectual's life, not a choice in which an intellectual subserves political radicalism. Radicalism is *one* way in which the intellectual asserts himself against alien values; it is the intellectual's misreading of his own past which has led him to think that radicalism is a means to "power" or "influence" in a purely political sense. It is rather a protective device and one which has been used ever since the modern intellectual came into being. The purpose of radicalism in this sense becomes not criticism of the bourgeois for the sake of criticism, or *épater le bourgeois*; that is too easy. It is rather a way of asserting a different set of values. Surely today these values are of greater importance than ever before and also in greater danger than ever before. Surely it is time to question the slops that are

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being fed us. And who is there to raise the questions except for the intellectual?

It is not necessary to be a radical in order to be an intellectual. And it is not necessary to be an intellectual to be a radical.* But in a bourgeois society, and especially one so monolithic as ours, it is very useful to be both. Sartre defines an absurd world as one without ends, and a fantastic world as one in which ends and means are reversed. It is the role of the intellectual to make such a point, and radicalism is one precise way of saying that America in 1956 is in a very exact way both absurd and fantastic. This can certainly never be said if a bourgeois scale of values is the only one which exists, for the bourgeois is, by definition, unconcerned with the problem. It can certainly never be said if the intellectual does not assert his own supreme value of rationality. A tough-minded creed of radicalism is one way to make such an assertion.

There are other ways—such as writing a novel or painting a picture. But if political radicalism is only one aspect of the intellectual's life, it is a vital part of the intellectual's life in a bourgeois civilization; the more bourgeois the civilization the more vital it is. And the more bourgeois the civilization the more difficult it is. Unless some assertion is made, the intellectual becomes a pen-pusher to the great; in giving up an independent system of values to pander to the mighty, he loses the foundation of his intellectual life. Thus the importance of the intellectual's political ideas to his whole role as an intellectual. Thus the importance of being radical.

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* It may be asked: Why does the intellectual choose the radicalism of the left which is implied in this article? The answer is that (a) the radicalism of the left has traditionally been the most convenient tool with which to assert intellectual values, and, much more important, (b) it has certain libertarian qualities which are fundamental to the intellectual's values and needs.

3. IN DEFENSE OF RADICALISM

Stuart Hampshire

One reads these days many cries of despair, rumblings of gloom, dark hints of the inadequacy of Reason (and reasoners), of the hopelessness of progress. At the best, one expects invocations of Orwell and Tocqueville, at the worst, of Burke and Kierkegaard, and certainly not an unashamed platitude about the possibilities of progress or the needs of enlightenment. I wonder why this has happened. There seems no good ground for despair or gloom, if we are really concerned with freedom in the world in general, and not only with a few particular liberties long

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familiar in Europe. There are more destructive bombs in the world, but there is not less freedom; it has only become more dangerous and disagreeable to defend it.

Throughout history, very few privileged societies have enjoyed that degree of personal freedom which is today enjoyed by large sections of the population of America, of most of Western Europe outside Spain, of Spain, of many parts of the English-speaking Commonwealth, and of some other countries comparably prosperous and democratic. And in many parts of the East, and of Africa, there are growing demands for greater freedom of the individual, and the means of obtaining it are coming nearer. There must always be a running change in the distribution of power within States and between States; some classes of persons lose some of their liberties, others, formerly oppressed and almost left off the pages of history, gain a freedom of choice that they never had before. Those who believe in freedom must wish to see it indefinitely extended and, as far as possible, equally distributed. They will support any movement of liberation among a suppressed section of humanity, provided that it does not bring with it some greater enslavement of others. These may be called the principles of 1789; I see no reason to repudiate them. They are now often derided as illusions; but perhaps this is because of the discomfort which their application is beginning to cause, particularly to those who in Western Europe have hitherto enjoyed liberties not widely shared elsewhere. I still believe in the "illusions" of the 18th century—Reason, Science, Freedom—so far as one can believe in abstract slogans at all. I do not see where they have failed; I only see the difficulty of calculating at any particular time where the greatest threat to freedom is and how it ought to be resisted.

But what is freedom? And why is it always right to defend and extend it, in preference to anything else?

A MAN is free and feels free: (1) If he is not liable to be killed, imprisoned, or otherwise maltreated without redress under an equal and impartial law. This is a necessary qualifying condition without which there can be no freedom at all. (2) If his manner of life, his activities, and enjoyments have been chosen by himself from a wide variety of alternatives open to him. (3) If none of these many alternatives open to him was made ineligible by human threats and sanctions. An alternative manner of life may be said to have been "open" to him if he would not, in fact, have been prevented from living in that way, had he so chosen, by anything other than his own abilities. Clearly freedom, in this sense, admits of degrees correlated with the number of alternative modes of life open. (4) If those who have executive power in the society can be influenced by his preference through some regular voting procedure. No man feels free unless he can to some extent participate in forming the prohibitions to which he submits.

There are good grounds for taking the attainment of human freedom, in this sense, as the end of political action. Whatever else men may seriously desire, need, or attach value to, they will tend to agree, in spite of other differences, in wanting and needing freedom to pursue their own ends, whatever, these other ends may be. There is no other equally wide basis of agreement on which mutual respect and consent could be founded. We

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have no reason to believe that any statements of the form "All men desire so-and-so," or "All men attach value to so-and-so," or "All men believe so-and-so," are true, where some positive end is stated; and we have every reason to believe that almost all statements of this form are either false, or too vague to be used, or too rudimentary. Therefore, either we think it is unnecessary to find an agreed basis for mutual respect in politics, or we will judge the rightness or wrongness of any political action by reference to some principle of freedom. If anyone thinks it unnecessary to find some basis of mutual respect, it may be because he repudiates the application of moral notions to politics altogether; in which case he ought in consistency to repudiate the distinction between right and wrong entirely. He could not maintain that actions are to be divided into political actions and non-political actions; this would be the fallacy of confusing domains of inquiry with divisions in reality. A man must acknowledge responsibility for all his actions, if he acknowledges responsibility for any of them. Alternatively, he may deny the need of a basis of consent on the ground that a policy is right only if it promotes an end known to be good in itself, irrespective of whether this end is agreed to be good by all or most of the persons involved; freedom of choice must be disregarded in the making of policies, if the manner of life likely to be chosen is not that manner of life which is known to be best.

I do not wish to argue against this position simply on the ground that it increases the opportunities for conflict. If I did so argue, I would be implying that, like Hobbes, I take avoidance of conflict to be the end. In fact, I believe that the extension and safeguarding of every individual's equal freedom to choose his own manner of life for himself is the end of political action. Consequently I think that anyone who uses political powers in order to promote some positive end, which he believes to be the best of all ends, acts wrongly, if he at the same time restricts the freedom of choice of the adult persons affected. He is the enemy, however worthy the positive end which he pursues. Any moral standpoint whatever must involve having enemies, unless, following Hobbes, not having enemies is itself made the end of action and the basis of morality. Most of the political thinkers of the past, beginning conspicuously with Plato, were in fact enemies of freedom. One is unlikely to find many unconditional advocates of freedom between 5th and 4th century B.C. Athens and 18th century France: at the best, only benevolent neutrals, like Machiavelli.

Moral standpoints cannot be demonstrated; they can only be explained and expanded by showing the philosophical reasoning associated with them. If a man thinks that he knows what is good for men, and knows beyond the possibility of error, he may naturally consider himself justified in overriding the freedom of choice of others. If he thinks that he can only learn by accumulated experience what is good and worth pursuing, he will claim no final certainty for himself, and therefore will at least hesitate before overruling the different decisions of others. If he thinks that nothing can be shown to be either good or bad except in its relation to the will and feeling of some individual, he will unhesitatingly admit that he has no right to override the free choices of

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others in pursuit of any end of his own choosing.

THE FIRST of these three philosophies seems to me definitely mistaken, in the sense that it involves logical confusions about the nature of moral judgments. But I could not *prove* that any such claim to knowledge of positive ends must involve logical confusion; it is a matter of philosophical opinion, and no such opinion could be justified except by a prolonged argument going through most of the traditional problems of philosophy. The Roman Catholic Church, many of the Protestant Churches, the Communist Party, and many puritan and secular moralists would certainly claim to know what is positively good for men, beyond the possibility of error, in at least some domains of human conduct; and they are in consequence ready to disregard the freedom of choice of individuals within these domains. Relying upon revealed truth or some supernatural authority, or upon alleged demonstrations and intuitions, they will hold themselves justified in restricting someone's freedom of choice for a purpose other than the protection of someone else's freedom of choice.

The second philosophy is the tempered liberalism of J. S. Mill; freedom of choice is not in itself the end of political action, but it is indispensable to human welfare and progress, which is the ultimate end. But if the freedom of choice of some men, or of some group, was to be sacrificed in the interests of human welfare generally, could human welfare be the sole criterion by which the sacrifice was to be justified? It seems to me that it could not; but this is a moral opinion, which again I could support by arguments but could not prove.

The third philosophy is unrestricted liberalism. I shall call anyone who accepts it a radical. For a radical the right of each man to choose for himself his own manner of life, as long as he does not disregard the equal right of others to do the same, is the sole criterion in political decision. The fabric of political arrangements and institutions ought to be continuously adjusted with a view to securing the greatest possible freedom of choice to each individual equally and under an equal law. Any prohibition and assertion of power has to be justified, in the last analysis, as the extension of the area of choice open to some men so far too narrowly confined. There has always been in every society some group or class of persons who had a conspicuously narrow range of choice of different ways of life open to them. They are said to be not free, to some degree slaves, in so far as they are not in a position to choose for themselves among alternative ways of life, and in so far as this inability could be remedied by human action without any equally large loss of liberty by others. There are always ruling or privileged groups who have the power to make a wider range of choices open to the suppressed, but usually they will not yield unless they are threatened or forced. The class or group whose freedom of choice is in this way confined will, sooner or later, prepare to assert its rights, if it is sufficiently numerous and if it is not completely enslaved and ignorant. At any time in any society there will always be a more or less complicated set of tensions of this kind which will enter into the temporary politics of that society. Anyone who takes the freedom of the individual as his criterion of political decision must support the relatively suppressed groups which are claim-

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ing greater liberty for themselves at the expense of those who now have the greater power, as long as the suppressed groups are not aiming at an even greater suppression of the liberty of others. As a matter of principle, he will support any effective resistance to the predominating power of a small group in society, provided that this resistance does not itself take totalitarian forms and override the first and last conditions of freedom given above. At any time he will align himself with that group of interests which can most effectively resist the concentration of power most likely to obstruct or prevent the extending of equal liberty within the society. His enemy will always be changing, as one preponderating group succeeds another; and it is always easy for him to miscalculate the direction from which the greatest threat to the most essential liberties comes. His conception of freedom, the positive content he gives to this informal word in any actual situation, may become out of date as the pattern of society changes and new groups call for new freedoms; while still using the same good words, he may find himself, to his surprise, on the reactionary side in the dialectical process, a process which is, as far as we know, endless and irregular, freedom sometimes retreating, sometimes advancing, and always by the opportunist action of individuals.

A RADICAL will tend always to distrust those who speak of safeguarding our liberties. He will see in this phrase the conservative assumption that the degree and distribution of liberty already existing in a society is to be taken as the permanent standard. This assumption seems to lie behind M. Raymond Aron's recent article in *Encounter,* which analyzes English politics with scarcely a reference to what has become the most serious issue of government—policy in Africa and colonial policy generally. Because the old tensions, within England, have largely disappeared or change their form, there is the illusion of stability, and the new tensions may pass unrecognized. Any equilibrium in a society is only a temporary adjustment of groups competing for greater power and freedom; and freedom can only be served by siding with those who have so far been excluded from the full enjoyment of the liberty which the more powerful groups possess. And yet it is natural that those who at any time talk most insistently of the defense of freedom should be those who have the most freedom to lose. This is the very simple reason why radicals are apt to distrust any congresses, or other organizations, for the defense of freedom; for freedom is not something which has to be safeguarded, but rather something which has to be extended. If one tries to stand still, only defending the freedoms already established, one unavoidably finds oneself slipping backwards into repression. An attack on established freedom has to be met, not by digging in for defense, but by going forward to offer new freedom to those who now have little freedom to lose.

This was the significance of the mild and limited social revolution which resistance to the Nazis entailed in England. In the last few years radicalism has lost impetus in England, and in America and in Western Europe generally; governments have wished to stand still, digging in to defend established freedom against Communism, and consequently have fallen into mild repression. The greatest repression for which English-

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men, and other Western Europeans, are now responsible happens at a convenient distance and is not very fully reported: it happens in colonial territories. Any political and social system which can only be maintained by mass arrests without trial, withholding of the right to vote, concentration camps and movements of people away from their homes, is evil for the same reasons that Communism is evil. The bitterness and brutality of the opposition is not an excuse, but rather a condemnation of the social system which brought this bitterness into existence. Throughout Africa the advance of Africans towards greater freedom is generally obstructed; and the government of South Africa does not even pretend to believe in extending the freedom of Africans.

To notice these facts is the most obvious requirement of sincerity, if we are to talk of freedom at all. But there are others, equally well worn, which must surely be mentioned again. The Catholic Church is everywhere opposed, in principle and in practice, to the extension of each man's freedom to choose his own way of life for himself, at least in some essential domains. In the countries where the power of the Church is greatest, and conspicuously in Spain, there is always some degree of repression, not only in the legislation affecting heretics and freethinkers, but in less crude ways in policies of censorship, in university appointments and teaching, in schools, in the enforcement of a particular sexual morality, and in the suppression of dangerous knowledge. If Catholic repression is most evident and unconcealed in Spain, it also exists in less crude forms in other Catholic countries. It is impossible to pretend that the Catholic Church, taken as a whole, wishes to defend cultural freedom; it is a temporary ally against Communism, which is certainly a much greater threat to freedom than is the Catholic Church. But it is quite pointless, on such an occasion as this, to disguise an alliance of expediency as an agreement of principle. It is better to leave alliances of expediency to the moments when, as politicians, we are required to make the material calculations responsibly. We are surely required to mark clearly the issues of principle, the lines of division, in fundamental opinions.

Lastly, there is a certain degree of poverty, a drabness and despair in the conditions of life which still makes the poorer parts of some cities in Europe, and also the poorer villages in the country, seem like prisons in which all ambitions are hopeless. It seems that it would be impossible to break out and to start again; opportunity seems dead unless there is some sign of revolt. There are places where almost everybody does only what he must do in order to live, and where there is no alternative, no moment of free choice. Where such conditions exist, it seems to me that any effective protest or movement of revolt, even including voting for allies of the Communist Party, may be a defense of cultural freedom. The enemies of freedom who, having the power to alter them, allow such conditions of life to exist, are immovable unless they feel themselves threatened by a force that is really formidable; and sometimes and in some places it may be true that only the Communist Party is in fact sufficiently formidable and only temporary support of the Communists will count as an effective protest. And in some countries outside Europe, where the great majority

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of people have lived at the subsistence level for many generations, one may see two kinds of men, the two kinds seeming almost two species: those who, having wealth, may choose their own form of life and work, who may think for themselves and move to other places and follow their own ambitions and curiosities, and those who are never in a position to refuse the kind of life which circumstances impose upon them and who cannot even reflect upon alternatives. Every serious attempt to break out from this condition seems to me to be right, provided that it is restrained by some respect for the elementary natural rights of those who still stand in the way, and for democratic procedures, where these already exist.

Any revolutionary assertion of the individual's right to some share of the means to think and choose for himself deserves sympathy and support for the same reasons that would make us sympathize with an effective revolt of scientists, peasants, or other groups in the Soviet Union. The Communist Party will certainly crush even the most elementary liberties of its own followers whenever it achieves real power; but those who have no freedom to lose immediately may hope to use this lever of power, the only one they have, and then throw it away later. They may miscalculate, and their last state of frustration may be as bad, or worse, than their present one. But what other calculation can they make if there exists no other power which seriously threatens those who bar the way to improvement? They do less for fredom if they remain crushed and inert. And so do we, if we take sides against them, from fear of Communism, without trying to provide some alternative means of breaking out.

Freedom is only safeguarded by supporting every movement which aims at providing some greater diversity of choice for the mass of the people in any country anywhere, and which at the same time respects the right of minorities to vote, and equality before the law. Freedom of choice generally shows itself, whenever it is felt to be growing in any section of society, in public arguments, in new forms of pleasure, in travel and in movement, in experiments in building, in pride in cities, in changes of custom and morality and in the complaints of those who are dispossessed, in the new *emigré* nostalgia. These signs, still evident in America, seem to me to be becoming fewer in Western Europe as we lapse into a Restoration mood, soon to find Bonalds and de Maistres all around us and little Chateaubriands.

Most of the freedoms which we have wished to safeguard in Europe were won by rebels and radicals. Similar freedoms will be, and are being, won by rebels and radicals in Asia and Africa, largely at the expense of Europeans. If we meet to agree that the old radical ideas of enlightenment are naive, out of date and too simple, and that some new appeal to Burke and the sanctity of tradition is needed, I think that we will have met too late, in time only to show fear. But these are questions of opinion, of moral decision supported by argument. There can be few certainties, either in judgments of practical possibility or in judgments of right and wrong. There is only the necessity of argument and of sympathy.

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THE POLITICS OF MY NOVELS

Ignazio Silone

The following comment by the Italian writer was made in response to a critical article written about his work in a French magazine. Mr. Silone has ben kind enough to send it to DISSENT *for American publication.*

How can a writer discuss decently an aesthetic appraisal of his own works? All he can do is draw the critic's attention to some aspect of these works which he feels has been neglected.

1) There exists a certain crisis of national literary autarchies which has social origins, because it is a crisis of the dominant educated class, and of its language, formed in the 19th century. It seems to me that not enough attention has been given to one of the factors of this crisis, namely, to the importance which people of the South have assumed in various countries. The South is not merely a geographical but a social and historical notion as well, almost everywhere antagonistic toward the North. Almost everywhere it is poorer than the North and predominantly agricultural, whereas the North is industrialized.

2) The almost simultaneous appearance in literatures of many countries of poor peasants from the South constitutes a political coincidence on a world scale of particular facts and situations which, in the past, contributed only to dialect and folkloristic literature. It is a phenomenon which has not yet been sufficiently investigated. Contrary to the Marxist scheme, the poor peasant has become a more international personage than the factory worker. As has been said, this makes for a certain inconvenience for national literary autarchies, and for the disorientation of critics educated in the literary tradition.

3) In Italy, we have already had the "case" of the great novelist Giovanni Verga, who, for some time, was neglected and little appreciated by critics because of the coarseness of his language and the simplicity of his syntax. Then there have been other "cases" of the same origin. But it is possible that posterity will reverse the decision and speak of the "case" of Italian criticism of today. It is certain that linguistic purity, as elaborated by tradition, is no longer a sure measure of judgment for works having a new social inspiration. This could also explain why such works have less to lose than others when they are translated into different languages. This may be due to their poetic quality, which is bound more to the situations and modality of the literary representation than to their linguistic garb (without which quality there would be no literary translations, anyway).

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4) But books, the apologists of tradition tells us, are like trees: they are not born from nothing. Agreed. Yet they do not bloom necessarily from other books. In fact, nothing is more false than a merely bookish concept of tradition. Tradition is not only literary, and no literary tradition has ever developed like a homogeneous chain whose links would be made up of the individual writers and poets. As for what concerns me, I can say that, in my formation as a writer, the experiences of life, much more than those of my schools and readings, have exercised a decisive influence. Had I had a different existence, I am convinced that, even after attending the same schools and reading the same books, I would not have written at all, or at least not what I wrote and in that manner.

5) I do not feel that I portrayed poor peasants of the South as if they were in an a-critical state of innocence and provided only with a potential of conscience. This can be said about them, at most, in their encounters with political life. Otherwise, the "trumpet of Lazarus" [in *A Handful of Blackberries*] would be only a literary finding. Instead, even without taking into consideration the fact that it was suggested to me by a chronicled event, it represents for me an attempt to depict a popular spiritual heredity which is still alive in our South. Despite the clergy's corruption (or because of it) and the ignorance and superstition of the South's agricultural masses, there survives in them the primitive Christian concept of the expectation of God's Kingdom, *hinc et nunc*, as the Apostles brought it to them. In all critical epochs, this nostalgia for the Kingdom has inspired revolts and heresies, from Gioacchino da Fiore, Francesco d'Assisi, Celestino V, to certain anarchic and communist groups of today. Truly, the *cafoni* [poor peasants] are repressed Christians. Their deepest conscience is archaic and subterranean.

6) Literature has accustomed us to consider the "subsurface" of the human soul as the place of demonic tendencies, and psychoanalysis has confirmed and explained this. But how can one not admit that, in an unhealthy society, inhibitions push even honest feelings and ideals down into the personal and collective "subsurface"? When such a situation is prolonged, the consequences can be serious. Now, this is exactly the fate that the Christian ideal of a socio-religious transformation has had among us.

7) It cannot even be said for *Fontamara* that the *cafoni* are innocent and deprived of conscience. Their conscience is on a different level, and in this sense *Fontamara* is a tragic book. As in tragedies, the inner tension of the story results from the clear separation between the characters' conscience and the "objective" development of events. The catastrophe takes place unexpectedly and inevitably. But toward the end of the story the Unknown One (who seems to me a prefiguration of Pietro Spina) appears, in whom an attempt is made toward a dawning of conscience.

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THE STATE OF AMERICAN ECONOMY

Ben B. Seligman

I

Described by Eisenhower economists as a sideways movement, the downward turn in 1954 was overcome in a relatively quick reaction. Late in the year the major indices began to move up again and by July 1955 it was evident that those who were optimistic and bullish would win out. The automobile and home construction industries outdid themselves. Automotive experts had hoped to dispose of about six million cars during 1955; the public gobbled up 7½ million. New housing starts were expected to reach about one million; actually, there were about 1.3 million. The Gross National Product, the total of all goods and services produced, climbed close to the $400 billion mark. Consumers increased their spending by $20 billion—probably accounting for the quick recovery from the 1954 "sideway slip." But to do this, they drew on their saving accounts and bought on the installment plan as they had seldom done before. By the year's end, urban mortgages were 18 per cent higher than 12 months previously. At $35 billion, consumer debt was roughly half the disposable income, the highest debt-income ratio ever.

Most of the continued upward movement was in the private sector of the economy. Stimulated by easy terms on autos, houses and hard goods, sales volume zoomed, business inventories went up (some $4 billion worth) and capital outlays, or expenditures on plant and equipment, hit a record rate of about $30 billion per annum. During the summer, steel prices went up by $7.50 a ton on the average (after a one-day strike, the shortest in history). General Motors voted a 3-1 stock split and the Federal Government began to wonder whether we weren't getting ourselves into a real inflationary situation. The consumer price index began to push up again when everyone thought it had leveled off, while the largest Christmas sales splurge in U.S. history rounded out another wonderful year for the American businessman.

All this should have stimulated some very rosy forecasts for 1956. And there were, in fact, enough economists to say there would be a steady rise in economic activity. A New York *Herald-Tribune* round-up at the beginning of January reported that general expectations were for the National Product to push past the $400 billion mark before spring. This would make 1956 results even better than those attained

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the year before. The consensus was that prices would advance slowly but steadily despite the likelihood of downturns in automobile production, housing and farm income. The latter, said the *Herald-Tribune* experts, would be counterbalanced by further investment and a continued rise in consumer spending, especially for services, furniture and appliances. What this means, they said, is a "rolling readjustment at high levels"; it was evidently felt that rising activity in some sectors might percolate down to depressed activities in others. How this would buy groceries for an auto worker's family was not specified.

Such optimism is seemingly not unfounded. For seven years now, from 1949 to 1955, the securities market has enjoyed a long "bull" career. If the belief that stock prices are a harbinger of things to come has any validity, then surely economic prosperity is everlasting. After all, say the optimists, the market survived at least three major disasters last year: a congressional investigation, an increase in the Federal Reserve discount rates, and a Presidential heart attack, any one of which, in less resilient times, would have spelled collapse. Furthermore, they continue, business expansion plans will bolster any tendencies for the economy to slacken. The Ford Company, for example, announced a $1 billion investment program for 1956-1958, while General Motors continues to expand operations and earn astronomic profits.

Nevertheless, the majority of economists were cagey. Virtually all were looking for a slight drop in business as the new year started, and most of the arguments were about the extent of the decline. As one commentator put it, prosperity had stopped producing universal optimism. Many Wall Street experts were recommending that traders ought to have enough of a cash balance to allow themselves to bail out without too much hurt should stock prices begin to slide. There were signs that many economists were shifting from a bullish outlook to one of doubt and hesitancy. They were beginning to talk of the possibility of a "stale boom." They were aware, too, that prosperity is like a man on a treadmill and that a "stationary boom" is the one most likely to fall apart, like the fabled "one-hoss shay."

According to one survey, while only 12 per cent of the economists whose opinions were solicited felt pessimistic in mid-1955, 26 per cent were worried at the end of the year. They were saying that a ceiling had been reached; bottlenecks were going to develop because of insufficiencies of steel, copper and aluminum; more factories and more investment would be needed simply to keep the economic treadmill going at the same pace; and that consumer demand might give out before the full impact of capital investment could be felt throughout the economy. Moreover, the farmer hasn't been doing too well, and it was anticipated that the prices he receives for his goods might drop another 2 or 3 per cent.

The more pessimistic views are exemplified by the statements of Edwin G. Nourse, former head of the Council of Economic Advisers,

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who, at a recent national gathering of economists, predicted a drop of 15 to 20 per cent in business activity. A decline of such magnitude is indeed frightening, for it could easily snowball into something worse. However, like many of his professional brethren, Nourse tried to sweeten the bitter pill by speaking of a "disinflationary recession." Though there are dangerous soft spots, the economy is strong, he said. Particularly concerned, however, with the over-expansion of credit, Nourse cautioned that mounting boom pressures could explode with serious repercussions.

Consumer credit in 1955 had been about $35 billion, over $4.5 billion more than in the previous year, and virtually all of this was in installment sales. Only about $8 billion of this type of credit was in service and charge accounts. Most of the installment sales increase, of course, stemmed from automobile purchases. The net increase in automotive installment credit was about $4 billion in 1955. However, this does not show just how much was really borrowed by car buyers, since it is a net figure; the total loans to auto buyers must have been at least four times that amount. Not only were more cars being purchased on credit, but down-payments were cut and the repayment period was increased. Add to this what has been described as the "quick-sale" and it is easy to see that there is much water in the fatted calf.

In fact, there had been so much resort to gimmicks and baits and tricks to tie up customers and load them down with kennels, wire fences, carpeting, repair jobs, sewing machines and disposals that there were some doubts about the *quality* of consumer credit. So heavy has consumer debt become that it appears to be taking about 12 cents out of every dollar. In effect, the expansion of installment buying in 1955 has meant that consumers were borrowing from future income to buy now. Credit extension thus adds to the treadmill character of the economy. It must continue to expand or, at the very least, remain at a level of $35 billion per annum, or demand will drop—unless, of course, consumer income rises sufficiently to make up the difference. But a rise in income of that magnitude does not seem to be in the cards.

II

All this is somewhat reminiscent of the Veblenian description of economic crises. In his *Theory of Business Enterprise,* Thorstein Veblen had noted that credit extension was a crucial element in the unfolding of the boom and bust cycle. Initially employed as a device for enhancing the profitability of business enterprise, credit became intertwined with the capitalist productive apparatus. It is employed at first to improve and expand plant facilities and to push sales, so that the volume of business will grow. The drive to capture part of the consumer's dollar impels businessmen to resort to credit devices in both purchases and sales. A sense of buoyancy springs up to give the economy a feeling of everlasting prosperity. But soon loan credit begins to exceed in value the underlying real capital and the stage is set for true infla-

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tionary pressures. Eventually, concern arises over this discrepancy and creditors either seek new collateral or demand quick settlement. A forced realignment of capital values takes place which, in other than Veblenian terms, might be described as the beginnings of a depression.

In its broadest outlines, much of the present situation might fit into this exposition. We may very well inquire whether we are not really reaching a business cycle *turning point.* This is that critical phase of the cycle during which a variety of factors are joined to enforce an alteration in the *direction* of movement. Expansionary drives may be cumulative and are frequently self-reinforcing, but their action cannot be perpetually upward. Since past experience indicates that prosperity does not go on indefinitely, we are tempted to ask what takes place when the break does occur. Perhaps a theory of cyclical turning points will help explain the present nature of prosperity.

The late Wesley C. Mitchell advanced a classic description of the business cycle. He divided the cycle into two main parts, an expansion and a contraction, each preceded by a relatively short turn, a revival and a recession. If we merely focus attention on the turning point itself, we may begin to see today's reality mirrored in the theory.

In an expansion costs generally rise. Plant additions and the renewal of contractual obligations on less favorable terms than were obtained before increase the overhead. Operating costs go up as overtime and wage rates climb. Increasing prices allow less efficient firms to remain in the market and take part in the mad rush for goods. Shifting costs of raw material become important factors in jacking up prices and, according to some economists, they are even more significant than the supposed rise in labor costs per unit of output. This expansion is accompanied by increasing credit, along Veblenian lines, as evidenced by the rapidly increasing volume of bank loans during such periods. Interest rates, the price charged by banks for lending money, also rise, but this does not discourage the demand for loans. The supposed conservatism of the bankers seems to disappear as they, too, become optimistic. Cash-flows increase as more currency is needed for payrolls and retail buying. Bond prices begin to fall, not so much because interest rates rise, but because investors decide that equity securities—common and preferred stocks—will bring a larger return.

Add to this familiar picture a disturbance in some important industry—for example, autos. There is a reduction in the sales income of suppliers and a cut in wage income. Vendors of food and clothing begin to suffer and they deem it more advisable to pay off accumulated debts than to continue to invest in inventories. Repercussions are felt throughout the corollary industries, such as machine tools, tires and glass. If the break is sudden, the shock may be a severe one; if there is heavy involvement with the banks, trouble is doubly compounded by virtue of forced liquidation of credit.

Even without a sudden upset, it is quite conceivable for prosperity

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to exhaust itself. The primary reason for this seems to be a limitation in available resources and manpower. Bottlenecks begin to spring up at various points; there are insufficient numbers of certain types of skilled and semi-skilled workers; the railroads find it difficult to meet the demands placed on them. Moreover, changes within the structure of industry itself may take place during an expansion which can lead to future dislocations; new goods or new ways of producing old goods influence cost conditions and prices, and as the economy expands these add to the distortions that are built up.

III

This gloomy outline hardly seems to match the economic experience of 1955. We have witnessed an unparalleled state of well-being. Yet there are words of caution. Says the *First National City Bank Economic Letter*: "... the economy must walk a tightrope—maintaining an uneasy equilibrium at a high level between inflation, on the one hand, and deflation, on the other... It is possible that the real advances during 1955 could give way to illusory gains compounded of rising prices, involuntary accumulation of inventories and overextended credit. The economy does not yet show convincing signs that excesses have reached dangerous proportions, nor are they, in any sense, inevitable. But they could develop if we substitute enthusiasm for caution and emphasize prosperity to the extent that we forget its problems."

There are industries whose current activities seem to promise perpetual prosperity. Steel output hit a record of 116 million tons, a 30 per cent increase over 1954. Even better, booked orders guarantee that the furnaces will not be cut back for at least six months. The demand for cold-rolled sheets, heavy plate, freight cars and structural steel continues unabated. What seems to be disturbing steel manufacturers at the moment is the four-year wage agreement which expires June 30, as well as the unhappy prospect that the automobile industry may not buy as much steel in 1956 as it did in 1955. Thus far, however, the demand has been so strong that some of the old furnaces, long retired from active blasting, are being restored to duty. Equipment is being redesigned and production methods altered in an effort to force production up. All this feverish, almost frenetic, activity suggests that the bottlenecks we spoke of are beginning to appear. When these choke off operations, the steel magnates will have a third item to worry about.

The present record is mixed. This too is a characteristic turning point feature. Soft goods, such as textiles and apparel, have seemingly recovered from the doldrums of the last two years. Textile concerns did about 80 per cent better than they did in 1954, despite some severe competition from imports, especially Japanese goods. Increased demand from consumers supplied the necessary fillip for women's wear. But moving over to so basic an industry as railroads the picture is somewhat different. While the gross return for rails was high, yield on in-

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vested capital was a mere 4 per cent, something which made bankers and railroad magnates screw up their faces in wry dismay. They complained, also, that the 4 per cent gain was overstated because of special accounting devices required by the Interstate Commerce Commission. As a result, the railroads are looking for a substantial hike in rates.

What has kept the economy going, in large measure, has been the continued high peaks in construction. New building, plus repairs and maintenance represented about 15 per cent of Gross National Product. It was responsible for 15 per cent of total employment; this was no small factor in the present prosperity. New housing starts exceeded the million mark for the seventh straight year and seemingly there was no end in sight. However, much of this hectic activity was stimulated by a small or no down-payment policy, often with a 30-year financing period. The total amount of mortgage debt outstanding for "family homes" reached over $86 billion last year. This continuous upward pressure upset Washington officials and mortgage terms were tightened. The no-down payment clause in Government insured housing was eliminated and five years were cut off the financing period. And so, home building, in the last quarter of 1955, began to thin out. Experts expect home building to drop as much as 10 per cent in 1956; the more optimistic estimates, such as those made by the F. W. Dodge Corporation, visualize that the slack will be made up by ordinary commercial construction, such as factories, storage facilities and the like. When they add to this suburban shopping centers, public utility construction, railroads, hospitals, institutions and other public works, the end seems nowhere in sight. But some questions have to be asked: what happens when family formation slows down (the low depression baby crop has come of age); when building costs begin to press on profit margins; when housing prices exceed the ability of the average wage earner to pay? These are the already visible signs of turning points.

What seems to be taking place in the automobile industry suggests another turning point. The industry had its biggest production and sales binge in 1955, and it would be truly phenomenal should the pace continue into much of this year. There were almost 8 million cars produced in 1955, but it is expected that output this year will drop at least 10 or 12 per cent. The great record last year was accounted for by excessive pressure on dealers, carnival sales methods, new car bootlegging, and the wildest kind of credit offers. While General Motors, Ford and Chrysler experienced extremely profitable years, dealer profits remained low enough for many to be forced into bankruptcy. Toward the year's end in 1955, deliveries to dealers were curtailed and inventories began to pile up once more. In December of last year alone, retail deliveries dropped by 155,000 units. By the end of January, car production was about 40,000 units short of expectation. The industry's trade paper, *Automotive News,* expected February to be even worse. This, in the main, affected new models. A downturn so early is not

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an auspicious harbinger for the coming year. The auto manufacturers are saying that they want it this way because they are planning an early introduction of 1957 model changes. Since these will be presumably radical style changes, it is hoped that demand in 1956 will be stimulated by enforced obsolescence. As this goes on, one begins to wonder whether the frequency of model changes will not have to be stepped up to maintain production. Evidently, the auto industry needs something like this, or a permanent war economy, to keep it going.

The fact of the matter is that income distribution patterns preclude the perpetual continuation of demand at high levels. Income has not been redistributed so widely as some of the more conservative journals would have us believe. True, 30 per cent of all families had incomes of $5,000 or more in 1954, as compared with 21 per cent in 1948, but the low income families (under $2,000) still numbered some 9.4 million in 1954. They still represented one-fifth of all families and, according to the Children's Bureau, they had a disproportionate share of the country's children. In addition, the number of families with incomes under $5,000 were 10 million more than those with incomes over $5,000 which, according to the Census Bureau, totaled 16 million. In the President's recent *Economic Report* there is this note:

> Consumers were of a mind to buy better things and increase their spending. This pervasive attitude combined with the willingness of women and young people to take on jobs so that their families might better approximate the plane of living they wish to attain has been an outstanding feature of recent experience.

Should such families revert to single wage-earner status, many of them would fall below the $4,000 level.

But it is among the farmers that there is the most questioning about prosperity. The farmer contends that while he contributes almost as much to national output as industry he does not receive a comparable return. The prices the farmer obtained in 1955 for his goods were 7 per cent less than the 1947-49 average, while the prices he had to pay for materials and equipment were up by 12 per cent. Net farm income had dropped almost $2 billion since 1947-49. What makes the farmer even unhappier is the prospect for little improvement in 1956. The Department of Agriculture has again predicted a drop in farm prices of 5 per cent, as it did last year. Furthermore, the "modified parity" formula, based on the average of the last decade rather than the old 1909-1914 average, will have the effect of decreasing Government price supports by about 5 per cent. In addition, acreage allotments will be more stringent and somewhat smaller. Farmers might feed their corn to hogs or cattle, but this is profitable only if animal prices are higher than feed costs. At the end of last year, hog prices in the midwest were about $10.50 per cwt., as compared with feed costs of around $14.00 per cwt. Lower farm income, it was reported, was beginning to be felt

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generally: farm implements sales dropped and banks were having trouble collecting on loans.

When it comes to farming, however, the total figures may be somewhat misleading. Among the almost half-million American farms, there are about 100 thousand large, prosperous, "suitcase" farms, really field factories, based on integrated production techniques. They account for over 25 per cent of total farm sales and, like all other farmers, are beneficiaries of Uncle Sam's helpful price-support program. At the other end of the spectrum, there are 1.7 million "hobby" farms which have no impact on the market, and a million small poverty-stricken plots, chiefly tenant holdings, which supply about 10 per cent of farm output. These are simply too poor to be disturbed by problems of price supports and farm income. It is the 2 million farmers that supply 60 per cent of the farm products that are howling the loudest today. They are, in the main, in the so-called rich mid-west; their average annual income approximates $4,000. This may seem pretty fair for the farming business, but since most are heavily mortgaged it is not likely that the return on their investment matches the return in industry.

Perhaps the best place to watch for turning point characteristics is in the financial market. On the New York Stock Exchange, 1955 was a year of high-volume trading; almost 650 million shares exchanged hands. But, say Wall Street experts, it was a rather thin market. By this they mean that only a small part of all the stocks, approximately 5 per cent, was bought and sold. This implies that investors kept their portfolios zipped up and refused to take part in the year's hectic trading.

Coupled with this as a turning point indicator was the large volume of currency in circulation, which reached record levels at the end of 1955. To some observers this meant that consumer spending at retail levels was also high, as indeed it was. But the $31 million cash supply was also a reflection of tightened credit, for it seems evident that when the Federal Reserve sought to choke off credit, people began to dip into their cash resources. The spending spree continued unabated, so much so that savings banks were perturbed when their deposits did not rise as much as anticipated. Such developments presaged an inflationary situation to which the Federal Reserve reacted with great haste. Rediscount rates, the price charged to member banks for loans, were raised to 2 per cent, thus making it more difficult to obtain bank loans. The FHA and VA tightened maturity and down payment terms on insured loans: by October commercial bank rates had gone up to 3½ per cent, the highest in 25 years. By the end of the year, short-term interest rates had begun to overtake long-term rates, closing out an era when money had been "cheap." Nevertheless, the expansion in credit continued, for the banks merely sold their Government securities in order to obtain the necessary reserves for lending. The question whether such borrowing and lending was reaching the danger point was being fully debated at the year's end.

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Even the President's Council of Economic Advisers seemed concerned about what it described as the challenge of prosperity. They warned that the continuance of general prosperity could not be taken for granted and that alertness to changes in economic conditions and a readiness to modify and adapt policies was essential. It was evident that the President's Advisers felt this had to be said now because they too, had noted a number of turning point characteristics. By late spring of 1955, observed the Council, the expanding demand for output, swollen by excessive credit, was already pressing against industrial capacity. It noted that shortages of steel, nickel, copper, cement, plumbing fixtures, lumber and other materials had become extensive and that many types of skilled labor were scarce. Wages and prices were "beginning to stir." By the end of the year, continued the report, the scope of the expansion in the previous twelve months had narrowed and the pace slackened.

Some observers have argued that all these warnings have a "short run" character with no substantive basis in the real long range economic outlook. They point not only to the seasonal nature of the slump in automobile production, but also to the whole battery of built-in stabilizers such as unemployment and bank deposit insurance, a better controlled banking system and a stronger labor movement. But basically, it is said, there is the simple fact that the kind of garrison economy we now have will probably counteract any sustained drop. Government spending for national defense, now at a rate of about $40 billion a year, is expected to increase, and even assuming that the armed forces will be merely maintained at their present levels, increasing costs for new continental warning systems, guided missiles, atomic powered carriers and other wonder weapons will force expenditures upward.

The leverage that this lends to the economic system is undeniable, but is one that rests on an uncertain political fulcrum. Whatever promising long range conditions develop as a result of spending for war in no way can become internal to the economy itself. In the absence of such "investment" capitalism has a tendency to falter and stumble; what happened in 1949, just prior to Korea, illustrates the argument. Present prosperity seems rooted in the moving sands of profit inflation. Credit and prices seem to have no real basis in current production. The facts of the case are simple: while in the decade before 1952 consumer and mortgage credit rose in proportion to Gross National Product, the increase after 1952 has been considerably greater. Mortgages were four and-a-half times greater than the rise in output; consumer credit increased more than twice as much; and automobile credit went up at least five times more than the national product. We are sitting on top of a boom that has been built up by an unheard of credit expansion. This is a most precarious economic situation. Under ordinary circumstances a limitless expansion would be unlikely. When such a boom does explode its reverberations will be heard for many a year.

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AMERICAN NOTEBOOK Some Brief Comments On the Domestic Scene

How Digital Were My Computers?

A Communication

DETROIT

True enough the Ford people asked Walter Reuther how he was going to collect dues from those automata and Walter Reuther answered how are you going to sell them cars.

It is also so that *Newsweek* said that the Ford Engine Plant in Cleveland produces ten times the engines with half the manpower, but this was a mistake in the first place, very hyperbolic, but everyone who wrote or spoke about automation thereafter repeated it; it was translated into most of the political languages around the world, and translated back into English.

The literature also refers to the ordnance plant where they put the man in simply to relieve the anxieties of the engineer who designed the place, the television industry which came and went and never did get around to employing the huge numbers of people that had been predicted. The oil industry, as everyone knows who has read any of the articles on automation, is now on a flow basis, output is not measured in units but in another magnitude—flow rates.

Is automation a totally new concept?, the reports ask. Here the literature quotes Del Harder, Ford Vice-President or John Diebold, the precocious author of the first book on automation, and who between them, share credit for inventing the word. You have your choice between the low-brow Detroit automation, which is no more than a contemptuous step forward in materials handling, the automatic movement of objects being processed from one manufacturing stage to another, or you can take the high-brow definition, not Detroit Public Relations but the MIT Division, which talks of closed loops and servo-mechanisms operated by binary computers with tentacled tapes in systems that can do everything human beings can do, plus many things they can't do.

Dear Karel Capek, the sweepers have gone, every semi-automatic operation is on its way over the horizon, there is a device that can read blueprints and make tools and dies better than a machinist can in person, and simultaneously in a hundred cities, not to mention the white collar machines that watch over banks far more effectively than human tellers, that detect forgeries, pull in the string on

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kited checks, compute payrolls and make adjustments on checks to take account of medical expenses for children born last June who had scarlet fever in September.

A qualitative, decisive alteration in the life process, it is something called feedback, it gives change in the Coca-Cola machine, it is selling stockings and sandwiches, and soon, by reacting to the color of a man's eyes through a transistor using impulses over a stamped electric circuit it will automatically add the exact amount of cream to the automated coffee anyone habitually uses, and if the patron is diabetic it will shoot him full of insulin when he bends over to agonize. All this with footnotes.

DIRE DAYS IMPEND; some disastrous, automated electronic event which will emerge from a plastic die could amount to a greater setback in the struggle against the totalitarians than the loss of three divisions. The event itself is concealed by an iron curtain, or perhaps is lost in the folds of a wrinkled belly, or obscured by the undulations of rice in the fields of Indochina except for the fact that the labor movement does have a program that will ambush disaster and make the robots the servants of humanity in a glorious age that will be unveiled by the efforts of people of good will working on PAC Committees, and somehow ratified in negotiations between the companies and the unions in new contracts which will not simply include cost of living adjustments and automatic annual improvement factors, but also a feedback that will operate a complex transistor brain powered by the sun, and set to tell the weight and fortune of every worker whenever he passes the time clock.

This will be brought about by shorter hours, higher wages, longer vacations, training on the job for workers whose skills are made obsolete by technological developments, earlier retirement, pay on automated jobs commensurate with the new vocabulary used to describe their activities, relocation allowances, a guaranteed wage, and a greatly expanded education system geared to teach everyone from the cradle to the grave both to operate the machines of the future and to enjoy the leisure the new electronic brains and hands will produce.

The precursor to the automatic factory, the atomized factory, produced a great comic work of genius, the movie "Modern Times." By inadvertence, and not by art, much that is written about automation is comic in the tradition of Chaplin, in that it is as clearly ridiculous when applied to the developing scene as Chaplin was hilariously comical reacting to nuts and bolts as he would to nipples and bodies.

Automation, statements specify, must not be confused with run of the mine technological change. Automation is a rubric which comprehends a decisive qualitative change in the production process. It is a second industrial revolution which heralds the arrival of devices that will transform the society as completely as the first industrial revolution made the 19th century a monster outgrowth of the 18th century. Automation, long pause, eliminates the governing ratio which in the earlier technology connected the number of people employed in production to the unit output.

AN IMAGE. There is a lake and a village. In the earliest days water was brought from the lake to the village

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in goatskins. The number of people who could carry goatskins, the goatskins available, determined the quantity of water delivered to the village.

When donkeys and leather skins, and later clay jars began to be used one man could transport more water than before to the village, but still the number of men and donkeys and pots was a measure of the total production of water. Horsedrawn water wagons superseded the donkey carts, then tank trucks.

One man driving a two-thousand tank truck was enormously more productive of water than the original goatskin boy, but water output could still be measured in man output.

Then one day a huge pipeline was built connecting the village and the lake. It became possible to get water for every imaginable need by turning a valve. Getting more water within a wide range no longer required the employment of additional personnel or trucks, except perhaps for production increases far beyond what one village would ever require. Additional water became a matter of opening a valve wider. Even here a man was not needed because the valve could be engineered so that it opened and closed as the need for water increased or decreased.

The production and delivery of water no longer depended on manpower. Wages ceased to be a factor in production costs. Thus when a Detroit automation engineer was asked what the hourly rate of the remaining two workers of an original hundred should be, he replied pay them what you want, if you want to be generous pay them ten bucks an hour, it doesn't matter.

PRICE, which traditionally for most products is bottomed on a limiting connection between an input of effort, unit labor costs, and a product output measured in costs, becomes unrepresentational and abstract. In the automobile industry any approach to continuous production multiplies profits so embarrassingly that they appear politically troublesome in the same way that any flow product when quantified in the magnitudes of everyday life, water, air, gas, oil, for example, is characterized by impossibly large multipliers which magnify any unit profit out of economically finite bounds.

The smoothly worn phrase, economy of abundance, has been prematurely polished down to meaninglessness now that an actual eternity of abundance emerges, and hardly anyone, no politician or political statesman for business or labor, seems to have recognized it, or to have connected its consequences to price policy or to have made room in his calculations for its impact.

Within the calculable future, presumably, unless MIT is a gag and Norbert Wiener is the pseudonym of S. J. Perelman, the manufacture of metal products, the stamping and assembly of many electrical objects, the production of chemicals, plastic forms and fibers and the performance of a variety of white collar labors will be technologically beyond automatic regulation by manpower limitations, or by wages, prices, or profits in the old fashioned supply and demand way, just as the economic determinations which formerly located industries in cities and particular areas will also cease to be relevant in many particulars.

Negotiating higher wages for workers in automated plants will become a useful but inconsequential activity

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in the new technological employment. Should the million workers in existing automobile plants be supplanted by 100,000 in the relocated auto industry of the 1960's, a Guaranteed Annual Wage, a 100 per cent increase in wages, a thirty hour week for them will not weigh a penny-worth in the economy.

Retraining programs for the 900,000 displaced workers, keeping the example uncomplicated, sounds sensibly Utopian now, but in the context of the days ahead they will reveal themselves to be colorful, drifting screwballs, as inapplicable to the situation in the world as the Townsend Plan.

The workers who will remain in the automated production process could be represented with the highest efficiency by a union and still the bargaining decisions would presumably be a backwater activity so far as the control of automation for social purposes is affected. Moreover, automation may undermine the influence of the labor movement itself in the lives of the surviving workers, for the personnel of automated plants tend to be professional: engineers, mathematicians, physicists, designers, experimental tool and die, occupations which are encouraged to remain outside unions by the Taft-Hartley Law, and which on their own account have not been powerfully attracted to collective bargaining.

A demand on automated, corporate, enterprises, if they are successful, as Ford, GM, Chrysler, General Electric, DuPont, Excello, IBM and dozens of others are, to lower their prices has not been made because serious price cuts by the front running enterprise would have put most of its competitors out of business. Furthermore, it has become plain that within the range of possible price changes, increases or decreases have relatively little effect on distribution.

Price in the new economic order is less meaningful as a regulation of supply and demand, but more crucial in determining the location of political power.

In the automated flow industries, any feasible price generates profits of a magnitude which introduces a new dimension into the society outside the reach of the anti-trust laws, the Robinson Patman Act and similar rules of the road in the same way that an airplane is a dimension beyond highway regulations.

Decisions accompanying automation, moreover, raise additional questions. When companies locate new plants outside existing legal communities, they gain freedom from local controls and taxes at the same time other forces tend to pull the nation's cities apart.

People and activities are leaving the cities along with industry. Whites are fleeing to restricted suburbs, shopping centers are emanating quanta-like onto rural land two and three rings beyond urban boundaries. The concurrence of these movements suggests the possibility that displaced workers may become the unemployed inhabitants of economically gutted cities.

Whatever will happen, however, at the present time, existing political boundaries frustrate most social efforts to control and direct technologically animated community alterations. The positive changes going on outside the jurisdiction of cities and counties create vacuums which militate against the possibility of developing effective programs to deal with the negative

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consequences of changes in the near future.

In general, the brush of automation against the society not only makes machinery and men obsolescent, but also accentuates the developing impotence of political agencies.

The increasing exclusion of human beings from the production and distribution of goods and services has a parallel in the economic and social machinery of the American society. The evolution from the shopkeeper, family farm, tradesman, small business economy to the IBM, General Motors, DuPont of the present; the conquest of the labor movement by spokesmen, technicians and specialists with the consequent decline in rank and file control; the passing of the direction of political parties from human bosses of political machines (small businesses) to the institutionalized companies, labor unions and other bureaucracies all relatively impervious to democratic penetration; together organize a history where human beings have less and less and less voice.

The grand design presents an image of a runaway world, a cybernetic device out of control, or under dominance of a feedback operating in a hermetically sealed circuit—at least hermetically sealed against any entry with the blunted political notions embodied in the speeches on automation to date.

An inevitable impression from a reading of the literature is that very few people or agencies have actually looked outside in the last ten years. The few people or agencies who give the impression of having looked through a window recently which faces on the world make an odd assembly: Norbert Wiener, Lewis Mumford, who was superbly prescient about the technological logic twenty years ago, and David Beck and James Hoffa and their associates in the Teamsters Union.

But while hardly anyone has paid much attention to the voices of Wiener and Mumford, the hands of Beck and Hoffa have reached out to lay hold of the vulnerable arteries upon which automated industries are still organized – the Teamster – organized over-the-road trucks, Teamster-organized loading docks and Teamster controlled warehouses. These facilities are the external assembly lines of the new, glass-paneled factories with which the companies are ornamenting the countryside in a vast movement toward decentralization.

Automation, by transplanting factories from their former city sites and by displacing men at their old tasks, is weakening the industrial unions that came out of the New Deal. A central economic switch has been put at the beautifully manicured fingertips of the Teamster Union leaders.

Thus, the Teamsters are from day to day, because of these developments, increasingly capable of saying yes or no to any economic activity, automated or not, whether the feedback operates an open or closed circuit, no matter how the servo-mechanisms are activated, by tape or punch card or by digital or analogical computers.

Success Formula

Consider yourself a commodity to be sold. How would you go about writing an advertisement on yourself?

—Bernice Fitz-Gibbon in *Glamour*, Sept. 1955

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LATIN AMERICA: A POLITICAL REPORT

Sidney Lens

I

The fall of Juan Peron took place in accordance with the basic rhythm of Latin American politics. The dictator is gone; the historical reasons for his emergence remain.

Peron was a stop-gap, a shrewd schemer who by suppressing the problems of his country created the illusion of having solved them. But it would be a mistake to suppose that he was merely another vest-pocket despot, or that with his fall everything will return to "normal." The tensions and contradictions that spewed him into political being continue to operate—and with increasing force.

For the "normal" of Latin America is itself abnormal: twenty republics that began their national revolution in the first quarter of the nineteenth century have been unable through the intervening hundred and twenty-five years to complete it. The "normal" of Latin America is a society resting on a landed oligarchy, buttressed by foreign capital (primarily American) and defended by comic opera armies.

THE LATIN AMERICAN OLIGARCHY had already received some heavy blows by the time Peron consolidated his power in 1943-46. Always a raw-material producing area—exporting coffee, tin, copper, sugar, wheat, beef, and similar commodities in exchange for finished goods—Latin America found itself in a crisis during World War I when the advanced countries were unable to supply it with manufactured goods. In self-defense the twenty republics began to industrialize. The depression of the 1930s gave an additional impetus to this process. Unable to sell their goods abroad and consequently deprived of foreign exchange, they could not buy the manufactured items demanded by the oligarchy and middle class at home. Result: another step toward domestic industrialization.

In 1947, for the first time in history, the production of manufactured goods in Latin America was greater than agricultural production. By 1952 factories were producing $11 billion as against agriculture's $8 billion. There were still many more people employed in the villages, but mainly because agriculture was far less efficient. Production of goods and services went up from $28½ billion in 1945 to $40 billion in 1952; consumption from $24 billion to $33 billion; and investment from $3.3 billion in 1946 to $6.4 billion in 1952. In Argentina there

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were some 49,000 industrial firms and 600,000 workers in 1937. Seventeen years later the number was approximately triple. The figures tell the story of a region trying to break the shackles of mono-product enslavement. Perhaps in relation to the need the pace is slow, but when considered in relation to the past it is rapid enough.

Increased industrialization means that new classes are emerging, classes with needs entirely different from those of the landed oligarchy. In many instances the oligarchy blends with the new capitalist class. A lawyer in Rio de Janeiro may also own a *fazenda* in the interior, which is operated by an overseer. Many of the Italian immigrants who flocked to Brazil worked first as peddlers, then as small businessmen, later as large factory owners, and finally invested some of their profits in landed estates which the old aristocracy had been forced to mortgage or sell. The oligarchical structure is still there, but a thin layer of capitalism has been superimposed and keeps growing.

Until quite recently the only capitalists in Latin America were foreigners, Britishers, Americans, Germans. Now a native capitalist class has emerged and is growing. Perhaps one of the basic reasons why the Latin American revolutions of the early 19th century were so conservative was the absence of a native middle class to provide leadership. In the United States, because we already had an important commercial class to guide the revolution of 1776, it could achieve a freedom and depth unknown to Latin America. But the men who fought for land reform or for political unity in the Spanish colonies, were quickly pushed into the background. Independence was won by the native landowners whose only aim was to replace Spanish domination with their own. Without leadership from classes other than the landed oligarchy, the Latin American revolution was one of the most sterile in history.

You have to see this semi-feudal oligarchy in life itself, as I recently have, in order to realize how enervating and slothful it is. Illiterate, incapable of any independent action, the Latin American peasant still lives in bondage to his landlord. His village is a mere string of mud-huts, sometimes whitewashed, seldom electrified. Sometimes he receives a daily wage and perhaps a few items of food. More often he has a tiny patch which he is permitted to work for himself three days a week, in return for three or four days work on the land of his master. On occasion he shares the crop, paying a rent in kind of 50 per cent. Millions of peasants own no land at all, work for as little as 30 cents or 40 cents a day. If the peasant does rebel it is purely on a local basis, which means that there is little chance of success. Neither the peasant nor the landlord has much incentive to improve production, the peasant because he has no interest in land which doesn't belong to him and which he may not be permitted to work next year, the landlord because he lives in a backward milieu, dependent on government export policies and lacking both a home market and the competitive incentives that stimulate capitalism. Society staggers under the weight of changelessness.

But now the situation is changing. Tin still makes for 57 per cent

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of the national income of Bolivia, oil 70 per cent of the national income of Venezuela, copper and nitrates 27 per cent of the income of Chile. The twenty republics manufacture more than in the past but exclusively for internal consumption; exports are still limited to raw materials even in such industrialized countries as Brazil and Argentina. Tin is *the* export in Bolivia, wool and meat in Uruguay and Argentina, coffee in Brazil and Guatemala, bananas in Honduras, sugar in Cuba, copper and nitrates in Chile, oil in Venezuela. But while the continent has not shifted too far from a single product economy, it is definitely moving away from one-class domination.

II

The significance of Peron was that he reflected and knew how to take advantage of these changing class relations. When he first became minister of labor, after the 1943 coup, he was under the illusion that he would one day serve as Nazi gauleiter of the hemisphere. All the generals were convinced Germany would win the war and wanted to be allied with her. But Peron went further; he dreamed of building Argentina into an overlord for the continent. For that he had first to industrialize, so that his military machine might be effective; and second, to create a mass base other than the army. To be dependent on the army meant being beholden to the oligarchy and checking the pace of industrial change. The bourgeoisie might offer a base for Peron but it was not large enough, nor class-conscious enough, to challenge the army. The only possible counterweight to the army and the oligarchy was the working class.

On the eve of the 1946 elections Peron decreed a thirteenth month's pay as a bonus for all workers. He promulgated a welfare program that is considerably more extensive than that in the United States—free medical care, vacations of 10 to 30 days per year, pensions at 60 after 25 years of work, etc. He set rules so that the landlords were required to provide showers, to pay certain minimum wages and the like. Peron was lucky. Because he had quite a bit of capital to play with, $1.7 billion in foreign exchange, he could "bribe" the working class with little difficulty.

Peron thus was able to create a mass base. Where the old legitimate unions, under Socialist and Anarchist leadership, had 300,000 members, the Peronista Confederation of Labor, including agricultural workers, numbered 5½ million. For the first time in Argentine history labor unions had grievance machinery, and in the early years a worker invariably won his grievance. Discharge became next to impossible. The laborer gained "dignity," to use the term made popular by Eva Peron. Many of Peron's claims were of course fraudulent. Living standards went up only slightly; for the skilled workers they actually went down. Nonetheless industry did move forward; hundreds of thousands of peasants in backward areas flocked to the city to become urban proletarians—and the backbone of Peron's following. The contrast between rural and

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urban life was so great that they became eager converts to Peron's *Justicialism*. The more urbanized worker remained hostile or neutral, but the peasant-turned-worker, or the unskilled man who was upgraded as a result of industrialization, became a Peronista.

Ultimately Peron's strategy misfired. In the end he had to lean on the very "Yankee Imperialism" he had started to oppose; and he fell by the very army against which he had tried so hard to erect a counterweight. The corruption of his regime, the outright robbery, and the lack of both economic and political freedom plunged the nation towards crisis. The $1.7 billion was almost dissipated. The working class could not be given any wage increases last year. The new industrialist class chafed under innumerable trade restrictions. And the bureaucracy itself was rent with dissension as a result of Peronista favoritism. Once the working class became politically neutralized last year, Peron's end was in sight. With the "counterweight" inactive, a segment of the military again took over.

UNLIKE MOST OTHER Latin American dictators, Peron did not serve the feudal class. But he did not serve the working class either; he *used* it. His real political and social milieu was the small strata of new robber barons whom his politics enriched, men like Jorge Antonio and Eva Peron's brother, Duarte. Peron himself gained a vast fortune. His primary orientation was toward domination of the whole region. To that end he talked of "economic independence," he bought up the big utilities and railroads owned by British and other foreign capital, and he even put forth the idea of "a third position" against both Capitalism and Communism. Later, when he lost the opportunity for Latin American domination and when Argentina itself was in crisis, he begged for American capital from Milton Eisenhower and quietly interred the concepts of economic independence and the third position.

To some extent all the dictators of Latin America—there are at least fifteen—stoop to a bit of Peronism. Getulio Vargas in Brazil can be said to have been a forerunner of *Justicialism,* also combining demagogy, reform, and appeal to the working class in an attempt to build a base other than the oligarchy. And even those dictators who still serve the oligarchy cater to some extent to labor. Every Latin American country has a welfare program similar to that of Argentina, pensions (usually 100 per cent of the regular wage), high severance pay (usually one month for each year of service), vacations, limitations on the right to discharge workers, free medical care, and large subsidies to government-controlled "unions." Manuel Odria in Peru permits local unions, but he does not permit them to federate into regional or national groups; and any unionists who get out of line find their way into his overcrowded prisons. How many hundreds or thousands are incarcerated throughout Latin America is hard to say. But what is both new and significant is that even the most hard-bitten dictator attempts to create some kind of labor following.

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III

Peronism was an abortive national revolution, a clipped, partial and distorted attempt to change Argentina. Most of the republics, however, have not yet reached even this stage. But at least two countries have started a genuine national revolution and are currently trying to complete it. Mexico and Bolivia point to the future of all Latin America.

The Mexican social revolution began in 1910 and has been proceeding at a sort of stop-and-go tempo ever since. For the first two decades the change was primarily political; it lagged considerably in the social field. But after the advent of Cardenas in 1934 the new regimes have been stable and have instituted a certain amount of social reform. The oligarchy has lost its land, and plots have been divided among the peasantry. Foreign companies have lost their oil holdings and the state itself now operates this resource. Church and state have been separated, schooling speeded up, and the labor movement has grown into adulthood. The country manifests all the symptoms of industrial growth: roads, irrigation, electrification.

In Bolivia progress toward fulfilling the national revolution has been still greater. In 1952, for the first time on this hemisphere, the working class was in the forefront of a revolution. When the Bolivian army refused to permit Paz Estonssoro to take his seat as president, even though he had been democratically elected, the nationalist movement (the MNR) organized an uprising against the militarists. Initially, this revolt, resting on dissident members of the military and police, seemed on the verge of disintegrating, but the Bolivian working class, with a quite remarkable discipline and self-consciousness, intervened in defense of the legally elected president. Undoubtedly, the Bolivian Trotskyist group played a decisive role at this point. Though small, it had been active among the tin miners in Potosi and when the civil war broke out it helped provide an ideological stimulus for the activity of the Bolivian workers. Three to four thousand men gave up their lives in this struggle, for when the miners descended on La Paz they came armed with nothing but dynamite. The army was defeated by this popular uprising and Paz took his post as president.

Unlike the typical palace revolution of Latin America, this one brought about deep changes in the social life of the nation. Only four years earlier Indians had been prohibited from walking the main streets of La Paz in their native clothes, so inferior had their status been. Today a large portion of land belonging to the landlords has been distributed among the Indian peasants who till it. The peasants are armed with rifles, and at least 50,000 workers carry arms and belong to an organized labor militia. So strong is this concept of an armed people that no one, not even the U.S. embassy which has given considerable material aid to Bolivia, has yet dared challenge it. The old generals have been sent into exile and for the time being the army remains a weakened and secondary force in Bolivian society. And while

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land reform is still not as complete or well-conceived as it should be, the power of the land oligarchy has been decisively decreased. As a result, the Bolivian regime commands a dynamism that the oligarchical governments lack, and labor plays a role in national life that is greater than in any other American country.

The Paz government has nationalized the major mines belonging to the *rosca,* i.e., Patino, Hochschild, Aramayo, and has instituted a long range program for diversifying the economy. It plans to develop the fertile but long-neglected Santa Cruz area, to exploit oil reserves, to electrify, and to build roads connecting with Brazil and Argentina. By 1957, it is hoped, the economy can produce an additional $10 million a year in food, thus cutting the amount that it imports, and also earn an additional $11 million a year through the export of oil. According to Bolivians I spoke to, this should eliminate the need for U.S. aid and put the country on a firm footing.

BUT SERIOUS DIFFICULTIES remain. Like all revolutions in backward countries, the Bolivian revolution has run into two severe problems:

1. The paralyzing limitations of a one-commodity economy;
2. The emergence of a *nouveau riche* stratum which corrupts the revolution from within.

Bolivian economy rests entirely on mining; mineral exports constitute 97 per cent of its total, three-quarters of it tin. The money gained from exports of minerals goes to buy foodstuffs and other basic commodities needed for sheer survival. In the days of the Incas, the Indian farmer could live on what he produced on his communal farms, but with the Spanish conquest, and later the domination of the tin barons, he became a kind of serf, with the economy shifting from virtual self-sufficiency to utter dependence on the world market. By the time the Paz government took power, the fate of the nation literally depended on tin. But at this very moment, unfortunately, the price of tin fell sharply. Minerals which in 1951 had brought Bolivia $145 million now yielded only $109 million. This meant that the import of foodstuffs had correspondingly to be decreased, and that with the shortage of goods, prices would zoom. The Boliviano fell in value to the point where 4,000 were worth no more than an American dollar.

At the beginning of the Paz regime, the U.S. had taken a lukewarm attitude, but when it now found itself in a desperate crisis the U.S. provided economic support. Most Latin Americans of the left who think of U.S. policy as unvarnished imperialism, cannot understand why the State Department sent Paz millions of dollars in foodstuffs—$20 million in 1955 alone. But the truth is that the U.S. had no genuine alternative. Failure to aid a moderate nationalist like Paz might have led to a further stage in the Bolivian revolution, very likely a government of the left. An astute U.S. ambassador, somewhat keener in comprehending the basic tendencies of modern politics than most of his colleagues,

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explained all this to Washington, and the State Department decided, shrewdly for once, to support the Paz regime in the hope that by doing so it could be persuaded to take a more "moderate" course.

The second danger I have mentioned—the emergence of a *nouveau riche* stratum that is corrupt, mercenary and cowardly—is perhaps inevitable in revolutions occurring in underdeveloped countries that rest upon an uneasy alliance between the working class and various elements of the "liberal" bourgeoisie. The revolution is made by capitalists, workers, peasants and intellectuals; but the social horizon of the bourgeoisie, particularly the kind that is spawned in Latin America, is severely limited. Seldom can it see beyond the immediate opportunity for profits, and almost never is it capable of disciplining its appetites sufficiently to participate in a planned effort to develop the nation's resources. To compete with industry of advanced countries, it needs enormous state aid and long-term state projects; which means, in turn, that the state must build roads, railroads and electrify the countryside; and more, that the state must educate the working class and free the peasant from his paralyzing dependence on the local landlord. All this, however, is impossible without high taxes and capital accumulation, that is to say, without severe limitations of profits.

But that is precisely what the *nouveau riche* of Bolivia, like its counterpart in Mexico, so bitterly resists. Incapable of any long-range class perspective, it hungers for immediate profits, for quick turnovers and freedom from income tax. It corrupts government officials and penetrates the government bureaucracy, demoralizing the more devoted partisan followers of Bolivian nationalism. A fusion of corruptors and the corrupt takes place in government, and what emerges is a system of bribery and theft that is simply beyond description.

The clash between the ambitions of the *nouveau riche* and the interests of the population becomes intensified once the government of national revolution has consolidated its position. In Bolivia today that clash manifests itself in schisms within the ruling party itself. A right wing has developed which demands that the "revolution come to a halt," there be no more nationalization and employers be freed from restrictions and given larger subsidies. A left wing demands nationalization of ineffective industries, higher wages, lower prices, vigorous measures against profiteering and inflation. Upon this conflict the national revolution founders.

IV

Held in check now for 125 years, the Latin American revolution bursts out here in authentic and there in distorted forms—but it bursts out. On the positive side, there are Mexico and Bolivia, the Figueres regime in Costa Rica, and the many nationalist movements with socialist overtones, such as Accion Democratica in Venezuela and APRA in Peru, both of which held power briefly after the war. The Peron and Vargas episodes, for all their Latin demagogy and waste of

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social energies, testify perhaps still more to the fact that fundamental changes can no longer be prevented from taking place in Latin America.

The nature and quality of these changes depend very considerably on the attitude the United States takes toward them. If it wants to, the U.S. can make or break any government in Latin America, except perhaps the Argentinian. Though it has no armies on the continent and no longer intervenes as openly as once it did, the United States exerts a control as forceful as if it did have armies stationed in the capitals of the republics. Without the lifeline of U.S. trade, no Latin republic can survive. We buy 43 per cent of what Latin America exports, and sell more than 50 per cent of what she buys. Direct U.S. investments total $4.7 billions in oil, mining, manufacture, transport and agriculture.

As the Latins say: any time the U.S. sneezes, Latin America catches pneumonia. When there was a move in Congress last year to limit the import of Venezuelan oil into the U.S., the Venezuelan regime immediately began to shiver. If we were to cut imports of coffee from Brazil and increase them from Colombia and Guatemala, that would radically affect the internal politics of all three nations.

Even more striking than these economic facts are the political ones. A prominent Guatemalan told me the story—I have every reason to trust his honesty and knowledge—of the Castillo Armas "revolution" in 1954: At first the State Department made overtures to the Arbenz regime. Get rid of the Communists, it told Arbenz, and we will help you. When Arbenz procrastinated, three different positions were advanced among top U.S. policy makers. One, presumably the Dulles view, was that the U.S. ought to impose an economic blockade on the regime, simultaneously choking off its life blood and conforming, as Dulles so dearly wishes, to "international law." Another position was that the U.S. should try to "buy" the generals in the Arbenz regime for a typical Latin American coup. The third position was to utilize Castillo Armas for a military invasion from Honduras. When Mexico refused to agree to a blockade, the first plan had to be abandoned, since with oil coming in from Mexico, Guatemala could have withstood a blockade for a long time. The second plan had finally to be abandoned because Guatemalan General Number One proved somewhat recalcitrant. Finally, Castillo was set free to march, General Number One decided he had to yield, and Arbenz fled.

Whether all the details of this report are exact I cannot say, nor in this context does it very much matter. What does matter is that it sheds light on the continuing and enormous power of the U.S. in Latin American affairs, a power based on economic pressure, political manipulations and, when absolutely "necessary," military sanctions exercised through a puppet.

The U.S. can thus be a force either for helping the long-aborted revolution or for propping up the oligarchy. Until now, and with only a very few exceptions, the State Department's role has been unambiguous: *it is the friend of the dictators, the comfort of reaction.* Where there

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are no dictators, as in Uruguay or Chile, it sympathizes with and indirectly helps the men of the right, seldom the anti-Communist left. By judiciously withholding aid from the reactionary Latin American governments, the U.S. could stimulate the emergence of democratic life; by giving them the support it currently does, it has helped perpetuate the oligarchies, which means to suppress the masses of Latin America and to create the conditions in which Stalinism can thrive. Bolivia is an exception, as is Mexico. In Argentina, U.S. policy was two-sided and uncertain, though with the fall of Peron it has shown no interest in any further movement toward a restoration of genuine democracy. But in the main, its policy, as elsewhere in the world, is clearly to support the right.

IN THE LONG RUN such a policy can no longer work. If the process of industrialization and the movement toward completing the national revolution is interrupted, there will be serious trouble. Since 1953, in fact, there has been a tapering off of the rate of industrialization. Latin America is being wounded by what economists call "unfavorable terms of trade." In Chile inflation is forcing the labor movement to call one strike after another. The Chilean peso fell from 400 to the dollar to 700 in one year. Uruguay is burdened with 40 per cent of its 1954 wool clip and 55,000 unemployed—a rather large number for so small a country. Brazil was unable to sell millions of bags of coffee in 1954. In Cuba the export situation was so bad that sugar production decreased by 5 per cent, over and above a 30 per cent decrease the year before. Either increased industrialization at home will compensate for these reverses—or unemployment, depression and renewed civil wars will follow.

Nonetheless, the national revolution, though it can still be tripped and slowed, can no longer be stopped. Aside from the agencies of the oligarchy, the army and various brands of Peronistas, the political forces in Latin America are made up of rather weak liberal parties such as the Argentine Radicals, Stalinist parties, nationalist parties which sometimes have socialist orientations, and Socialist parties. The Stalinists, because of their outside support, are particularly strong. In Brazil, though illegal, they are a major force, publishing at least two dailies, many weeklies and commanding the only organized factions in the trade unions. In Argentina they are far less important than the Socialists, but strong nonetheless. Throughout most of the remainder of Latin America, the Stalinists are underground, but their efficient organization and the devotion of their militants makes them a significant political element in almost every country.

Except in Chile, Argentina and Uruguay, the Socialist parties are small. In Chile there are two Socialist parties: the larger one is more influential in the unions and "third camp" in political orientation, the smaller group has a popular frontist outlook. In Argentina the Socialist Party, fifty years old and with a long tradition behind it, is militant in action

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though more moderate ideologically than the Chilean party; perhaps the best way of describing its politics would be to say that it is close to the British Labor Party. The same can be said of the Uruguayan party. In Peru the Socialist Party, "third camp" in outlook, boasts of the only opposition members in parliament who resist the Odria dictatorship. In Brazil the Socialist party is weak, not even publishing its own newspaper. And in such countries as Guatemala, Mexico and Venezuela there are no Socialist parties, but the nationalist movements have some sort of moderate socialist philosophy or a socialist wing.

The fate of the new Latin America will depend on such movements, regardless of whether they formally call themselves socialist or not. But whether its future destiny is violent and thorny, or whether it will be peaceful and solid, will depend to a considerable extent on what Socialists and liberals do in the United States both to encourage kindred spirits south of the border, and to stay the hand of the State Department in supporting oligarchies. It is a region worth watching, not only because it is considered a U.S. bailiwick, but because it is so close to our borders and so tied in with our economy that a full-flowered national revolution there will have great repercussions within our own forty-eight states as well. So far the national revolution has been making great strides forward in Asia, lately in Africa. It is reasonable to assume that Latin America won't be too far behind.

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BOOKS

Exurbia Revisited

THE EXURBANITES, by A. C. Spectorsky. Lippincott. $3.95.

> SALES MGR
> Intangible exp, must be able to move effectively at top mgmt level & effectively understand "Big Business" problems. Should be able to handle 12 martinis.....12,000
> —Advertisement in New York *Times*, 5 February, 1956

I looked up recently after a sojourn abroad to find that a new word had sneaked into the language while my back was turned, like the 8:55 crawling into the station at Weehawken. The word is exurbanite, and unlike the West Shore Railroad it is probably here to stay, since it fulfills what the social workers call an unmet need. Its coiner, A. C. Spectorsky, like Sinclair Lewis before him, has used it to title his book.

Mr. Spectorsky's *The Exurbanites* is both a good and an exasperating book. It is good because it is a pioneering investigation into the mores of the new middle class who have spilled out of their city apartments into the country areas beyond the suburbs and who have become commuters but remain big-city types. Mr. Spectorsky casts a wide net and inevitably comes up with many an interesting specimen. His territory includes Bucks County (Pa.), Nassau, Westchester and Rockland Counties (N. Y.), and Fairfield County (Conn.), which means that he has under examination a variety of New York City-based salary-earners, ranging from $75,000 a year network executives close to the seat of real power if not actually warming it themselves, downwards to impecunious young agency men desperately anxious to look as though they are on the way up. Since New York is the center of the "communications" industry, the exurbanites are inevitably associated with it in one way or another.

Mr. Spectorsky has been to these exurbs—indeed, he is frighteningly knowledgeable about the minutiae of daily life in all five localities—and he has taken the trouble to gather some figures on income, railroad commutation, and the like, so that his study is grounded in reality, even though highly impressionistic. What is more, he is not afraid to say that exurbanites are manipulators rather than producers, husbands rather than lovers, providers rather than fathers, urban-focus-

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ed rather than rural-focused, middlebrow rather than individual in their tastes, ambitious rather than visionary in their aspirations, enslaved rather than liberated by their incomes. For his boldness alone, Mr. Spectorsky would be entitled to our respectful attention. *The Exurbanites* is a more original and provocative description of what is going on around us than the pronouncements of many another commentator with more impressive academic qualifications.

BUT I SAID that it is an exasperating book. This is partly because it has been hoked up to sell, although I for one prefer my reading matter about the American scene in a lively style rather than in the tone of a monograph for the *American Sociological Review*. No, what is disturbing is that although Mr. Spectorsky has lifted the curtain on a desolate new landscape, he himself insists (when not busy cheerily minimizing the desolation he has described for 278 pages: "Not only do they do the best they can at the difficult and exciting job of living, but the job they do is, under the circumstances, often remarkably good") that the desolation is limited to the five areas named above and to those people who work in mid-Manhattan between 42nd Street and 57th Street, between Lexington Avenue and 6th Avenue. I am not merely raising the petty objection that Mr. Spectorsky has deliberately narrowed his sights. Of course, when he says that an exurbanite "cannot or will not remember the time when he did not grind his pepper fresh from a small mill" he is abstracting snobbisms as common to certain Greenwich Villagers, Detroiters, Buffalonians and San Franciscans as to exurbanites—witness the mail order advertisements for "smart" household objects in the *New Yorker*. Far more important is the fact that this book includes a clinical analysis of certain developing traits in the national character, traits which—if there is any substance to the analysis—add up to a condemnation of the entire way of life which is producing them; while its author persistently denies that these traits are anything more than the sadly amusing characteristics of a severely restricted group.

This insistence I find unacceptable. It is of course perfectly true that a special kind of tension is engendered within families when the husband is bound to a train schedule and the wife is forced back on her own resources twelve hours a day. But Mr. Spectorsky would have us believe also that only in exurban families is one day a week given over to the children by fathers relieving their guilt at not having participated in their offspring's lives for the other six days; or that "fear, insecurity, living beyond one's means, drinking too much," are peculiar to "life in exurbia"; or that it is only exurban wives whose "most frequent complaint" is that "their husbands are sexually inadequate."

One would assume that the principal reason for Mr. Spectorsky's determination to pin these, and many other, miseries like so many badges of dishonor on the breasts of the exurbanites is that it sustains a saleable thesis: outlanders—which means all other possible book buyers—will predictably read with pleasure books exposing the heartbreak behind the glamor that is Manhattan and environs; while exurbanites themselves, always eager for self-anatomizing (the advertising men among them, Mr. Spectorsky justly points out, are patho-

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logically sensitive to criticism and hence addicted to gratuitous self-justification), will also search out anything that analyzes their life-patterns. And indeed *The Exurbanites* is a commercially successful book.

But there is also a negative reward for Mr. Spectorsky in his special approach. Since he disclaims any general validity to his survey beyond the confines of those in the communications industry in the New York area, he is thereby absolved from the necessity of commenting even in passing on the implications of his picture of exurban life for American society as a whole. He can end on the jocular, things-aren't-really-that-bad note that I have already quoted, and he can even invite us to grin wryly at this collective portrait of a group of sad sacks, to take it not as a descriptive analysis of a snowballing tendency but simply as a compendium of lively anecdotes. And of course if that's all we're after... Mr. Spectorsky is a first-rate case history-teller, and he stimulates us to circulate others that he has not included: one hears, for example, of exurbanite wives in Nassau County who have formed a car pool to commute to their Central Park South psychoanalysts...

But some of us may be stubborn enough to go on believing that social problems demand social solutions rather than individual solutions, or at least consideration of possible *common* avenues of progress. Implicit throughout Mr. Spectorsky's book is a recommendation of the course he appears to have followed himself: "If you don't like it where you are, why don't you go back to the City?" Which is like saying: If you don't like what you see and hear on television and radio, why don't you turn them off? The drift from City to Suburb and beyond is not confined to the New York area; it is nationwide. The drift is not temporary; it is irreversible. The new stratum of white collar technicians and idea men is *not* confined to the New York area; in the Los Angeles and Chicago areas, and indeed in every sizable American community the communications industry is burgeoning—branch offices as well as local advertising agencies, TV stations, newspapers, department stores, public relations outfits are claiming an ever-larger proportion of the ever-growing white-collar community. If these people do not live like the New York exurbanite it is not for lack of trying.

WHAT IS MORE, there is an intimate interrelationship between the problems of the exurbanites and those of the proletariat. Just how much difference is there between the worker enslaved to the time clock he must punch twice daily and the exurbanite enslaved to the train he must catch twice daily? Between the worker alienated from his tools, his craftsmanship and a genuine relation to what he produces, and the communications industry operator dealing in "intangibles," able to handle twelve martinis but with no more proof than the worker at the end of the weary day that he has actually produced anything at all? Between the debt-burdened worker, oftener than economists know shouldering two jobs at once or relying on a second family wage earner to help pay the freight on his mortgaged TV, car, washer, house and kids, and the living-beyond-his-means exurbanite, taking his work home at night and swearing that he could break even on just three thousand more a year? Between the worker's prematurely-aged

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wife, with her backaches and her notorious lack of sexual fulfillment, and the exurbanite's isolated and overworked wife, with her fifteen-hour day and her (according to Mr. Spectorsky, at any rate) notorious lack of sexual fulfillment? Between the worker who has become, as we used to say, bourgeoisified, whose main conversational topics are the soldier's staples of cars, women and spectator sports, who is becoming transformed into a TV-passive mass man, and the exurbanite who mistrusts, envies and ridicules the "egg-head," who is ahead of the highbrows "in everything but the most intellectual aspects of life," and who lends himself so easily to caricature as a faceless type?

What I am suggesting is that, even as the sheer numerical mass of the proletariat—or at least its percentile proportion to the rest of the population—is shrinking, its stigmata are perhaps being transferred to the swelling millions of suburbanites and exurbanites. Are we actually becoming a nation of tense, anxious and wretched white-collar proletarians, with nothing to lose but our uninsured TV antennae? This is one of the questions that the readers and contributors of DISSENT might address themselves to, and I should like to express my gratitude to Mr. Spectorsky for having provoked me, through his trenchant and admirably organized book, to raise it, even though he himself has thus far backed off from considering it.

HARVEY SWADOS

Work in the Machine Society

INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY, by Georges Friedmann. (Edited and with an introduction by Harold L. Sheppard.) Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois, 1955. 436 pp., $6.00.

No Marx-ward inclination is required to see that work is central to man's fate in modern industrial society. How could it be otherwise, when a man's job is the place at which he spends most of his waking hours; is the source from which he derives his income with which to demand society's resources, and which sets limits and gives form to his life chances; and is the single most important criterion by which he is assigned a rank in a highly rank-conscious society?

When these aspects of occupation are taken into account, it is clearly no longer possible to talk about work as primarily an economic fact. However significant the income-dimensions of a job may be, and however important the sheerly economic aspects of production and distribution may be for a society, the non-economic aspects of both work and the economic system are often crucial in the determination of the character and fate of any population.

To catalogue the various dimensions of any job is to indicate at the same time the many possible consequences of work.

We may think first of the objective correlates, such as the income, prestige-rating, skill requirements, educational prerequisites, continuity of employment, security systems, and the range of conditions of work, including

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hours, vacations, the quality of air, lighting, safety, muscular and nervous strain.

There is secondly the range of social involvements at work, those interhuman relationships where a man appraises himself of his worth in the eyes of his superiors, peers and subordinates. These have a second line of ramification, out of the factory and office, in those numerous places where a man meets those against whom he has learned to evaluate and measure the worth and the quality of his own job, and of himself in that job.

Third, there are all those elements which constitute the relationship of the individual to the job itself. Crucial here are such matters as the amount of choice and decision-making; the extent to which the job makes effective room for spontaneity and creativity, as against the quotient of routine, monotonous following of pre-set plans; the ability to work at one's own time-pace and space; the fragmentation of the organic totality of the work enterprise; the amount of control over product and machine; and lastly, the extent to which the job utilizes one's talents in a way and at a level deemed appropriate for one's muscles, nervous system and self-image.

THE ORDER OF LISTING of these three major dimensions, the extrinsic, the relational and the intrinsic, is not the natural order of their importance. Whether and how any of these aspects becomes decisive depends partly on the character of the society; partly on the particular sub-culture of which the worker is a member; partly on idiosyncratic facts of life history. Low income has less psychological significance when one has many rather than few companions at the same level. Or, a high income may count for little in the psychic bookkeeping of an individual if he is burdened with bad relationships with a work-superior.

But this relativity must be qualified. Otherwise we cannot make any organized sense out of the failure of modern industrial society even to come close to tapping the full potential of productivity in the population. When we confront this failure, and seek its causes, the evidence seems clearly to suggest that the productivity of any society will vary, all other things being equal, with the following four factors: (1) the extent to which the producers at all levels of talent feel valued by their society for their role in the productive process; (2) the extent to which they exercise a role in making decisions relevant to that process and their functions within it; (3) the extent to which they receive what they consider a commensurate return for energy expended and responsibility assumed; and (4) the extent to which there is provision for some type of creative relationship between themselves and their tasks.

It is noteworthy, but totally expectable, that the history of the improvements of the conditions of labor can be written far more in terms of significant changes in almost all other aspects of work than in those four facets just listed. Hours of work have been reduced; lighting, sanitation and air improved; rest periods standardized; security has been increased; the real standard of living has been raised; social relations at the job have been ameliorated. But nothing of basic importance has occurred so far as sharing more amply the power, the prestige, the profit and the play element of work.

Power to make decisions, and the right to a lion's share of profits are considered to be the unimpeachable prerogative of ownership and management. Fragmentation of work has been increased rather than decreased in the supposed interests of efficiency under conditions of automation. And the maintenance of a system of well-

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known invidious distinctions between different jobs has been rationalized as indispensable to the efficient location, recruitment and motivation of the higher echelons of talent in the population.

One cannot see clearly into the core of the problems of industrial society, then, if one takes the point of view of a single segment. A comprehensive grasp of these problems requires consideration of the basic interests of all elements: the consuming society, the entrepreneurs and the workers. From this threefold perspective, it is evident that any proposal to restructure the nature of work must consider three lines of consequence: productivity, profit and pleasure-at-work; productivity for the total society, profit for the entrepreneur and pleasure for the worker.

It is to Georges Friedmann's great credit that he grasps the complexity of the problems involved when three divergent interests are striving for predominance in the productive process. His present volume, which is the second part of a projected trilogy on The Machine and Humanism, is concerned with the character of work in a machine society, in which high productivity and private profit are measures of the desirability of any proposed alteration in the work situation.

He speaks primarily from an ideological identification with the Worker as Man when he insists that pleasure-in-work shall be granted importance equal to productivity and profit in the evaluation of any work situation. But it is again to his credit that he is willing to discard, for purposes of objectivity, his own convictions regarding the narrow limits which private ownership sets upon the range of possible alternatives.

Precisely because he does suspend these views of the inherent limitations in a profit-motivated society, he is able to make the greatest contribution to industrial sociology and psychology which has yet appeared in print: namely, a detailed specification of many possible ameliorations of the average condition of the machine-worker, at the same time that productivity will be maintained or increased, and no significant inroads made upon the present level or distribution of profits.

He raises questions concerning what concretely can be done (given a machine technology, a capitalist mode of organization, and a desired high level of productivity) to solve problems of routine; monotony; fatigue; demoralization; subordination of the man to the machine; the imposition of work-rythm upon man by the machine; arbitrariness of rule in the shop-organization; the parochialism of the culture and life perspectives of the workers; the narrowness of training and consequent job-immobility; the rigidity of work-rhythms; the failure to recognize individual differences among workers; the absence of reasons for pride in work; and the disappearance of the sense of craftsmanship.

His examination of the range of possibilities is far from being the exercise in speculation which one usually confronts. Rather, he approaches his task with a firm command over a wide body of the relevant European literature; a somewhat less firm, but still adequate, knowledge of the American experiences and reports; a gratifying

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series of cross-references to physiological and psychological studies; and his own wide experience at various jobs in different workshops in Europe. This, in short, is one of those rare books in which theory and fact engage in a productive dialectic; in which there is a fertile yield from the interplay of various disciplines; and in which all proposals are ultimately referred for their evaluation to the consequences for live human beings.

However trivial the results may seem when compared to the possibilities when the limitations inherent in private ownership are removed, the fact remains that modern industrial society, for all its enlightenment and supposed good will, has not yet done a fragment of what can apparently be achieved to ameliorate the condition of the machine worker, without any significant consequences for profits, and, indeed, with apparently beneficent consequences for total productivity.

Yet as Friedmann specifies the important things that can be achieved within the limits of the present system, he makes patently clear the larger possibilities under an alternative system of ownership and management.

THERE ARE ERRORS, to be sure. Principally they result from an over-eagerness to attribute the success of any alteration of industrial work to the increase in the workers' share of profits and decisions. The correlative error also appears, namely, an over-readiness to account for the failure of an experiment in terms of the inadequate provisions for profit-sharing and participation in decision-making. In both of these types of cases, it is not always clear in what way and to what extent the so-called causes were really relevant to the issues.

The single most objectionable feature is Friedmann's failure to be analytically clear about, and ideologically extricated from, his conception of the "total individual," or the "whole man." Since his use of Worker as Man is central to his analysis, the constant movement back and forth across lines of chemistry, physiology, psychology and sociology is sometimes more confusing than clarifying. Sometimes mottoes and slogans are substituted for analysis. And even in the best of possible meanings of Worker as Man, one would have to question seriously the extent to which any social institution, whether it be work, family, or religion, could reasonably use "total man" as a guide line to change.

In the quality of these errors, one sees Friedmann's real stature. He refuses, out of ideological conviction and the weight of scientific evidence, to be satisfied with the temporary alleviations of symptoms through the use of soporifics and tranquilizers. His concern is with whether industrial society, given its present limits, can reasonably take into account more human needs and desires than it has done in the past.

No explicit proof is ever adduced by Friedmann regarding the detailed ways in which the profit motive necessarily is antagonistic to a broader con-

BOOKS RECEIVED

RED, BLACK, BLOND AND OLIVE, by Edmund Wilson. Oxford Press. $6.75. Reportage of life among the Indians, a visit to Haiti, and a description of Israeli civilization. Also, a reprint and expansion of Wilson's travel diary written in Russia during the mid-thirties. Much of this material has already appeared in the New Yorker, but gathered together it makes for an extremely brilliant book, written with remarkable lucidity and from a generally radical point of view.

LITERARY POLITICS IN THE SOVIET UKRAINE, 1917-1934, by George Luckyj. Columbia University Press. $5.00. A thoroughly documented scholarly work providing a mass of details on the Stalinist suppression of culture.

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ception of human needs and desires. But the minimal level of imagination at which the management-sponsored experiments have tended to remain is reasonably good evidence that, at least in the view of management, no substantial broadening of the scope of workers' participation is possible.

It seems clear, then, that at any moment in time, the equilibrium among profit, productivity and pleasure will be determined not by any rational calculation of the lines of convergence of various theoretical maxima, nor by any drastic shift in ideology, but rather by the classs struggle in its most consequential form: the conflict between labor and capital. The power to insist upon one's point of view regarding a fair day's return for a fair day's work will be more telling than any philosophical exchanges.

It has recently become fashionable once again in some intellectual circles to attribute to the profit motive an indispensable role in the creation and maintenance of a productive and prosperous society. Friedmann's documentation of the cost to the worker, in terms of a debasement of a total life pattern, which arises from considering only profit and productivity and not pleasure-in-work, may help to restore some balance to the ideological persuasions of those mobile students of the class structure who have become slightly tipsy on the way up.

MELVIN TUMIN

In the Spring 1956 issue of

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LETTERS

Who's Alienated?

Editors:

If one is to judge from the Winter 1956 DISSENT, a blind spot has afflicted its contributors *en masse*. I refer to the contention that Marx believed that a simple cancellation of private property, "capitalism minus exploitation," is sufficient to dispose of alienation. Andrieux and Lignon, Henri Rabassiere, Erich Fromm and his reviewer, H. P., all believe that Marx held that to abolish private property is to abolish the alienation of the worker.

Marx held precisely the opposite. As early as 1844 (in the *Okonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte*), Marx argued that any overthrow of capitalism would be empty unless the alienated human values were recovered for man. The various utopian schemes for supplanting private property which would not humanize man he dismissed as "vulgar communism," mere logical extensions of private property, which require the continued mediation of alienation for their realization. Alienation ceases only when man becomes man in and for himself (*an sich und für sich*).

This position of Marx should be equally clear from almost any of his writings: for example, the realization in the *Communist Manifesto* that monopolization progressively destroys private property is certainly not tantamount to the contention that monopolization progressively destroys alienation—on the contrary, it intensifies it.

Rabassiere himself belatedly recognizes what Marx actually wrote on alienation in the postscript to his article.

All of these "interpreters" of Marx (with the possible exception of Andrieux and Lignon) held that something other than socialism is needed to alleviate certain traits of boredom, passivity, satiety, etc. What this "something else" is was generally not broached, although two (apparently contradictory) solutions were suggested: industrial co-determination and a return to a pre-industrial idyll of some small communities.

Now, the worker has his own problems, and among them is not to be found that image of the effete bourgeois which these "interpreters" would pass off as a common predicament. If one is to believe the statistics which DISSENT itself has published, the workers of the world, far from being satiated and passive, are on the contrary even now in the most acute distress of imperialism and "war unemployment."

What these "interpreters" do is to depict *their* symptoms as those of humanity at large, and then blame socialism for not alleviating them. They cannot or will not see that alienation is a class phenomenon. In a socialist society, as in the utopia of *News from Nowhere,* this middle class would continue to compete among itself for means of escaping inactivity, just as it does under capitalism.

The "interpreters" are perfectly at liberty to "rethink" socialism in any way they choose, and to hold that industrialism inevitably involves alienation. But they are not at liberty to do so in the name of Marx or Marxism, and they preferably should not even use the term "socialism"—the term involving, as it does, some historical kinship with the proletariat, to say the very least.

What is wrong with their researches in "mass culture" is just that: they treat of an amorphous, classless mass. If Marxism has any validity, it is the validity of the class analysis of society (which, again, they are free to abandon, but not in the name of Marxism). The questions with which they concern themselves thus have little to do with the questions of the means of production with which Marxists concern themselves. What this means in practice is something like this: if the Marxist researcher observes the same phenomenon in two adjacent classes (and whether such *is* observable is still a huge problem, the affirmative answer to which the "interpreters" facilely assume), he takes it as evidence of hegemony, not of class unity.

The pretensions to universality which these analyses make are similar to the utopian chimeras which DISSENT has so effectively pointed out among the New Conservatives and New Liberals, but has not as yet been able to see among the "New Critics" of bourgeois society. These

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symptoms should be recognized for what they are: proof *par excellence* of Marx's contention that the bourgeoisie is a dying class.

RICHARD DEHAAN
Boston, Mass.

The Dissent Forum

Editors:

I found the papers at the DISSENT forum in New York very stimulating, but I am sure that I am not alone in feeling that much of the value of the meeting was negated by the presence of professional speech-makers sent by the various socialist "sects" to uphold the gospel truth(s) against the DISSENT heretics. These people neither really listened nor cared to listen to what the speakers said, for they knew in advance that Seligman, Rosenberg, Howe and Coser were among the damned, and that all they needed to do was to denounce them. In itself this might have been tolerable, if only they hadn't been so long-winded about it, if only they hadn't adopted a tactic of saturation, one after the other getting up to mimic each other's righteousness. As a result, those of us who came to participate in a discussion grew weary and either left the meeting or sat back in disgust.

In the future, can't you arrange with the various spokesmen of the True Line(s) to refrain from overwhelming us with boredom?

ARTHUR GORDON
New York City

"Encounter" Replies

Editors:

In Harold Rosenberg's article, "Couch Liberalism and the Guilty Past," in your issue of Autumn 1955, the following passage occurs:

"...After reading his [Fiedler's] article, I wrote a letter to *Encounter* pointing out its distortions. Although I was a contributor, my letter was not published. In its sense of Cold War 'responsibility,' Couch Liberalism had learned to mimic the toughness of Red Front liberalism with its why-rock-the-boat cynicism."

I should like to advise your readers that the letter mentioned by Mr. Rosenberg was addressed to me personally, contained various private references to editorial matters outstanding between us, and was therefore regarded by me as a personal communication. Had I known it was intended for publication, *Encounter* would have published it, for we make it a principle to publish letters from our contributors, particularly when they take issue with something that has appeared in the magazine. In retrospect, I deeply regret having missed the opportunity for staging a Rosenberg-Fiedler argument, which would have been worth the watching.

It was an unfortunate oversight on the part of Mr. Rosenberg never to have mentioned the fate of his letter, in the correspondence we had with one another in the months that followed my receipt of it. This correspondence was cordial, and led to our publishing two articles by Mr. Rosenberg. Perhaps he was too sensitive to remind me of what was, for him, an unpleasant incident. Nevertheless, you can understand that I was astonished and more than a little taken aback by coming across the sentences quoted above.

IRVING KRISTOL
London

From Keynes

Editors:

Recently, after reading Ben Seligman's article on Keynes [Winter 1955], I came upon the following passage in Keynes which I thought might interest you: "...many Americans give their advice as though it were actually immoral to make suggestions which public opinion does not approve. In America, I gather, an act of this kind is considered so reckless that some improper motive is at once suspected, and criticism takes the form of an inquiry into the culprit's personal character and antecedents." (*Essays in Persuasion*, p. 60.) This was written in 1921.

HERMAN ROSEMAN

Appreciations

Editors:

Just when I wanted to complain about the Ph.D.'ish air DISSENT gives itself there appears such an excellent issue [Winter 1956]. Almost adjusted to your "tierischen Ernst" I was delighted and surprised by Henri Rabassiere's fluffy bubbles of learned humor; knowing personally of his deep feeling and adaman-

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tine sincerity on the subject ("The Right to Be Lazy") helped of course in the appreciation.

Congratulations and thanks for an issue that we, who don't romp and feed on enriched blue campus grass, appreciate.

ALEX OLSEN

Editors:

Unlike some readers who do not know what to expect from a magazine of this sort, I am getting more than I had expected in the manner in which theories, arguments, analyses of political, psychological and philosophic issues are presented. In my opinion, there hasn't been as satisfying a magazine published in this country since Dwight Macdonald's *Politics*. Possibly I am attuned to the type of thinking of your contributors. At least it is a highly readable magazine with some compliments to myself for this quality of perception and discrimination.

I was especially interested in Marcuse's polemic on Freudian revisionism and hope he will contribute more articles on the same subject as his point of view, unhappily, is in my opinion nearer the truth than Fromm's. This subject may not be so important as politics, nor so imminent, but it has a devil of an influence on our judgment and conclusions.

E. K.
Los Angeles

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DISSENT DOINGS

OUR MAJOR promotional effort this spring concerns students. We want to get a large number of new student readers, and though this means a financial loss, we are offering a special inexpensive subscription price for students. (See back cover.) It is hard to reach potential student readers, and our friends could be of enormous help simply by talking to students they know and buying a gift subscription or two for students.

Dissent Meetings. It's been a busy season. The first DISSENT forum that was held in New York City drew over 100 people and provoked lively discussion. Most of the papers presented at the meeting will be printed in the magazine. In this issue: Coser, Seligman papers. In Boston a well-attended party was held by DISSENT supporters, and in Detroit friends and readers of the magazine participated in an informal discussion with Irving Howe to plan for an enlargement of local circulation.

Books, Books, Books. We are very happy to report that a really impressive number of books is going to be published in the next few months by DISSENT editors and writers. Two—*Patterns of World Conflict* (Dial) by G. L. Arnold and *The Power Elite* (Dial) by C. Wright Mills —have just appeared; they will be reviewed in a forthcoming issue. Contributing Editor Sidney Lens has *A World in Revolution* (Praeger) coming out this spring; and it, too, will be reviewed in one of our next issues. Three books are coming from DISSENT editors: *The Functions of Social Conflict* (Free Press) by Lewis Coser; a *Study of Veblen* (Public Affairs) by Bernard Rosenberg; *Politics and the Novel* (Horizon) by Irving Howe. The first two this spring, the third early fall. [Not to mention Norman Mailer's novel *The Deer Park* (Putnam's) which has been out for several months.] It is our policy not to review books by the editors.

Held Over. A communication has come from Henri Rabassiere concerning the article by Gunther Anders on television. It will appear in the summer issue. Mr. Anders has been invited to answer, if he wishes.

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Miscellany

COUE AND THE LIBERALS

MICHAEL HARRINGTON

IN HIS TIME the "psychologist" Coué may have seemed a mere passing fad, yet he struck deep roots in America. His main therapeutic technique—the repetition of the sentence, Day by Day, In Every Way, I am Getting Better and Better—summoned up a persistent American capacity for optimism which survives not merely in the preaching of Norman Vincent Peale but, more surprisingly, in some recent articles on civil liberties that appeared in the *New Republic*.

The agent of this metamorphosis is John Roche, an historian at Haverford College and a director of the Pennsylvania Civil Liberties Union. His series of three articles is straightforwardly titled "We've Never Had More Freedom," and his central thesis is "that American freedom has never been as firmly established or as broadly shared as is the case today." Within the month, Roche had the distinction of being quoted approvingly by Sidney Hook in a *New Leader* article demonstrating that teachers, also, never had it so good.

There is a temptation to treat the whole thing facetiously, to oppose Roche's fabulous title to anyone's knowledge of the American reality, and let it go at that. But more serious attention is required.

Strangely enough, Roche's entire case is based upon a genuine insight into the civil liberties problem. He realizes that there has been a shift in the locus of the attack on freedom and that this fact is the heart of the matter. But then he compares the situation in America of fifty to seventy-five years ago with that of today and measures them against each other as if one could multiply donkeys by elephants and come up with a conclusion about the forest.

ROCHE ATTACKS the notion that there was once a "Golden Age of American Freedom" and that we are in a retrogression from it. But in dealing with this view—one would like to know *who* is naive enough to maintain it—he calls attention to a crucial fact. The American past, he points out, is filled with a sorry record of vigilantism which struck out at "The Non-Partisan League organizer in Minnesota, the Wobbly in Colorado, the abolitionist in Georgia, the Socialist in Oklahoma, the Catholic in Know-Nothing territory..." It was a consequence of the "decentralized authoritarianism" of a growing America. And this anti-libertarianism, Roche points out, is on the decline.

So far, so good. There is no question that *this kind* of vigilantism has diminished. Today, it is chiefly located in the Southern White Citizen's Councils, a serious enough matter to be sure, but in other areas it has just about vanished.

Behind this change, Roche finds "the increasing power and jurisdiction of national government over national life which has taken place as a concomitant, if not as a consequence, of the increasing industrialization and urbanization of the nation." He also advances a second factor which is questionable, if not downright wrong: the success of "civil liberty elites" in packaging the Bill of Rights and selling it to the American people. But let's stick to the first point.

I would argue that Roche's insight is crucial to an understanding of the civil liberties problem. The bloody struggle that took place, during the IWW era, in the streets of the Northwest for the irst First Amendment has been replaced by the less dramatic fight before the quasi-judicial boards of the federal government. Unless this momentous political fact is understood—that the locus of the attack upon freedom has been shifted—one completely misses the complexity of the present situation.

But how are we to assess the significance of this change? Roche does it by his donkeys times elephants mathematics. Talking about radicals today, he writes, "Compared with the treatment handed out to authentic radicals in 1918, they have merely attended a compulsory tea party." There are few broken and bloody heads, tarring and feathering is a thing of the past, therefore We've Never Had More Freedom. The point is also made, of course, in quantitative terms: "com-

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pared with the segment of American society that lived in a rightless limbo half a century ago, the segment that is today maltreated is minute, and this segment has a good chance of receiving at least the elements of due process of law."

Now it is true that our current centralized authoritarianism is more polite, it does not bloody heads. One might even play the numbers game and argue that it has not *directly* effected as many lives as the old vigilantism. Yet in terms of a threat to freedom it represents the growth of the power of the state over millions, over all those in Government employ, all those in defense work, and many in state, municipal and private, non-sensitive jobs. This has not yet issued into totalitarianism in America, but it provides the basis for such a development, it is a potential for anti-libertarianism which exceeds the wildest dreams of the most intransigeant frontier bigot.

Roche's curiously unhistorical comparison completely misses this whole point of potential, of relationship. Thus:

> Few people have fallen under the arm of the Smith Act—probably about enough to fill Tom Mooney Hall. In fact, they are probably holding a protest meeting against the "police state" there this week, for most of the convicted are out on bail.

Very amusing; downright hilarious. But has Roche thought about the fact that the conspiracy doctrine which was legitimized in the Smith Act cases has ramified throughout our culture? To be sure, less than a hundred Stalinists were convicted, but *because of the way in which they were convicted,* machinists are not working in Detroit, actors are barred from employment in New York and lawyers face disbarment proceedings for invoking the Fifth Amendment. Indeed, the old vigilantes could learn something about effectiveness from our new species who, clutching their copies of congressional hearings and reports of administrative boards, demand their own kind of political conformity.

But why does Roche miss this relationship? His articles make it clear that he is genuinely concerned with civil liberties. Indeed, he shows himself to be quite sensitive to most of the specific injustices of the last decade, so much so that one of his pieces almost contradicts the other two. Why then this tortuous attempt to prove that we've never had it so good?

The answer to this question is, I think, that Roche is part of a general tendency in America which is fast developing its own particular momentum. What first brought it into existence was the appearance of anti-Americanism in Europe where intellectuals sometimes crudely equated a McCarthy hearing with a slave labor camp. People like Sidney Hook reacted to this, and often they had a case, as when they objected to Bertrand Russell's description of an American "reign of terror." Hook and others like him were motivated by two factors: a distaste for the excesses of their opponents and a desire to score some "points" for America in Europe.

This second factor is immediately to be seen in Hook's approval of the Roche articles. What happens is that Hook's need to score points with the Europeans as a propagandist for American policy leads him—one would guess, quite unconsciously—to minimize the threat to civil liberties at home. Actually, this point does not apply to Roche, who would seem to be more critical of American policy than Hook. But the arguments of the Hook point of view have become so prevalent in America that people like Roche employ them even when they do not, apparently, accept their motivation. And this must be seen as a measure of Hook's success—I use his name not as a King Charles's head but as a immediately understandable mnemonic for a line of thought—and of the impact he has had upon our thinking.

We must indeed recognize with Roche that there has been a shift in the locus of the attacks on freedom. But this is hardly an event for congratulation, for its potential is terrifying and its present reality serious enough. To welcome, as Roche does, the appearance of a centralized authoritarianism is simply Coué for the liberals. It reminds one of Chesterton's sally against the historians: that sometimes one must show them obvious things, such as earthquakes and elephants jumping out of skylights.

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(Continued from page 106)

tians, but between liberal university students and totalitarian Falangists. With dead and wounded. There are also executions at twilight, at dawn.

The battle is not over, but it is not so spectacular as before. In this I agree with those who believe that the affair has lost actuality. That is to say, newspaper headlines no longer feature it. Some of us, however, must try to refresh the memory of forgetful colleagues. How? What things can we call to mind that are not too heroic, too generous, too just? For the sublime irks people. We would have to choose memories that do not exasperate prudence, nor offend common sense, nor try generosity of conscience, and especially those that do not reveal an extravagant concern with justice.

THE SPANISH PEOPLE were right—do you remember?—but it is dangerous to be too right. The attitude of the Spaniards was just, but it is bad taste to insist upon justice when it is so overwhelmingly real. The heroism of the Spanish people fighting unarmed against the three best equipped armies of Europe and holding out for three years is sublime, but the sublime annoys normal people who like to cultivate their inner life on the basis of relative virtues. Life is life and the days are slipping by.

The sublime is particularly tiresome to the so-called intellectuals. I am one. So are the colleagues who edit this review. But we do not succeed in finding, as so many other writers seem to do, a satisfactory synthesis of the Spanish war on the plane of fatalistic conformity, or even (giving each thing its proper value) on that of artistic emotion. A gramophone recording of Flamenco music is very nice occasionally but, after all, García Lorca's bones are in the earth. A poem is a poem and a song is a song, but Spanish republicans are dying in Russian concentration camps and Spanish prisons. This is something a little more fundamental and grave. Some of us intellectuals are still losing sleep, not because of the memory of the civil war, but because of the presence of that civil war in the world both in and out of Spain. We are not going to bother our colleagues with new allusions to the violence of 1936-39. There are some who think it madness to risk and lose seventy thousand lives in four weeks on the banks of the Ebro only to defend political liberties. Although on second thought, from such madness has come every good thing that life has to offer today in the world. But the sublime is poor as a rhetorical device. They are right.

LET US SAY, then, something very simple and pleasant and easy to understand. For example, that we Spaniards love America. Most Spaniards love America. The Spanish Fascists, however, are laughing at America. They have publicly declared—and in this they concur with the Russians

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—that Americans are stupid. A man named José María Pemán who calls himself a poet and has been president of the Royal Spanish Academy has written—I have the press clipping before me—that the presence of American sailors in Spain is unimportant and that if necessary—pardon the triviality of the quotation—they can shoot off their little white caps with children's slingshots. It is nothing very heroic but quite eloquent.

The only thing that we can do—avoiding the tiresomeness of justice, heroism or generosity on a sublime level—is to repeat what some Spanish liberals who, in 1937, were throwing grenades at the Nazis instead of pebbles at sailors, write us from Madrid. One of these Spaniards who loves America and who, like twenty-five million Spaniards inside Spain as well as others outside, had trusted America, has this to say: "There is hatred, discontent and confusion. Every day the situation is more tense and more secretly or openly violent. But it leaves us deeply perplexed to see that when the Fascist government suspends civil liberties, the tanks given by the United States to the Franco government roll down the streets threateningly. They still bear their factory trade-marks and the serial numbers of the American army. The people wonder how this is possible."

We too wonder.

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